DE QUINCEY'S WORKS.

VOLUME XII.

SPECULATIONS

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHIC

BY

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PREFACE.

The Paper on Lord Carlisle's *Pope Lecture*, which lecture, I believe, was read before an audience of working men, met with the singular fortune of an aggressive and angry notice: this notice came from an anonymous writer using the signature of *Peregrine*. As the points selected for assault were not matters of opinion, but of massy, immoveable facts, I found it difficult to understand how any critic, who should hold it among his duties to read previously all that he attacked and all that he defended, could have found his road open to this movement. At the moment of publication, I caught but a gleam of the writer's drift; and, according to my standing rule, I adjourn all notice of criticisms, sound or not sound, until some day or some month of leisure, with sufficient opportunities for research, may allow me to do the fullest justice to my opponent. Of such controversies lurking in arrear I have now one or two maturing for trial at a convenient time; and I have only to hope that the plaintiff or defendant in error may persist in living until my answer can reach him. Some of these, I think, have waited already for twenty-five or thirty years. Peregrine is therefore in luck this morning, since he will within three minutes have *his* answer, for which he cannot possibly have waited more than a trifle beyond nine years;

for my own article, *fons et origo* of the whole feud, was first published (I understand) in 1850.

The two* charges, which my brief paper alleged against Pope, as grievous impeachments of all pretension to honour and veracity, were founded,—

1. On his unprincipled attempt to weave out of the closing life and out of the death of an illustrious contemporary,† a ridiculous romance, that goes astray upon every feature which regards truth, or justice to the memory of the dead.

2. On his puerile attempt to father upon the English literature an origin which it is needless to call non-historic or fabulous, if examined as a pretended fact, since even as a dream it could find no proper place except amongst fairy-tales.

* '*Two* charges:' No doubt, as occasions opened upon me, other charges would be incidentally noticed: but the two here singled out, viz., that connected with the Duke of Buckingham, and that connected with the literature of England, were those two without which the others would not have been held as calling for any special attention.

† *Contemporary:* The last Villiers of that house might be fairly considered such in relation to Pope. He died in that memorable year (1688) which witnessed the birth of Pope. But the impression which this Villiers had produced amongst the men of his own age, by the splendour of his natural endowments, both intellectual and physical, was too deep to have faded away suddenly. And it should be remembered that, if the Duke in particular had been reputed to have enjoyed enormous advantages (though most of this rests upon hearsay and gossiping exaggerations), both he and his brother Lord Francis Villiers had made at one period large sacrifices at the command of that duty to the throne which they had been trained to think paramount among all public duties. Lord Francis, even when a boy of eighteen, had prodigally surrendered his life on the field of battle rather than give up his sword to one whom he regarded as a traitor.

The object of Pope was, if it may be allowed to borrow a modern slang phrase from the street, to "take a rise" out of the Duke as a derelict abandoned to *moralists*; this order of Poets, Lord Byron's pretended leaders among poets, having (it seems) a plenary dispensation from any restraints of truth. Pope's idea was—that, if he could be winked at in representing the *great* landed proprietor* as a pauper in

* In order to direct into a proper channel the inquiry as to the Duke of Buckingham's pretended pauperism, I referred to the *Fairfax Papers* just then published: which reference Peregrine strangely misconstrued as pointing to two little volumes, one of which was a record of the Duke's life by a cadet of the Fairfax family; the other being a little series of personal memoranda, drawn up by Lord Fairfax himself, viz., by the last (or better to distinguish him) the historical Lord Fairfax, who commanded in chief at the decisive battle of Naseby, in Northamptonshire, fought on some day a little before midsummer of the year 1645. The object of this little memorial is altogether mis-stated by Hartley Coleridge in his *Worthies of Yorkshire.* He supposes the stern old Parliamentary general to have been trying his hand at a specimen of *autobiography*, which word certainly never entered an English ear until at least 150 years after Fairfax and Naseby. The real object of the little memorial (or appeal to posterity) was this: Lord Fairfax, strangely enough for a lord, was a Presbyterian; and a Presbyterian surrounded by great leading officers far abler, more sagacious, and a thousand times more energetic than himself, Cromwell, Ireton, &c., who were *not* Presbyterians, but virulent haters of Presbyterians, being intense Independents. Down to Naseby, this religious schism had led to no great practical results: but every year the schism was ploughing deeper into the management of political affairs; every year the simple-minded and upright Fairfax found it more difficult to trim the balance between his conscience and the requisitions of his military allies. He drew up this plain little statement, therefore, as a brief key to the whole series of his acts whilst standing under this *conflict* of influences. And at last, when it was resolved to send a military expedition against Scotland, Lord Fairfax came to a resolution that he had now reached the ultimate limit of his passive acquiescences. Fight against the Scots, whom he regarded as his brothers under religious ties, he would not. This refusal on the part of Fairfax

the last stage of penniless destitution; if he could be allowed to substitute *sub silentio* a supposed charitable shelter from the weather, by some pitying Christian brother, for the true version of the case, viz., the hospitable reception by a tenant of his landlord, under a sudden local surprise of illness; if these harlequin changes could be effected, and if the tenant's house could be quietly metamorphosed into such a hovel as all Ireland is not able to show; with these allowances it would be possible to emblazon such a picture of ruinous improvidence and maniacal dissipation as would glorify harlequin, and would secure all over England to Pope's picture the reputation of the most impressive amongst—pantomimes.

Meantime, to the least reflecting amongst readers there

necessarily opened the way for the first time to Cromwell as an absolute autocrat. Cromwell was appointed to the supreme command thus laid open; and at the decisive battle of Dunbar, Cromwell it was that presided. But what connexion, the impatient reader asks, exists between the house of Villiers and the more ancient house of Fairfax? Simply this, that the sole daughter, indeed the sole child, of the Naseby Lord Fairfax, many years subsequently, was united in marriage to Villiers, the last Duke of Buckingham, and the particular object of Pope's falsifications. Now it is obvious that the Duchess, with her large settlements, rights of jointure, &c., must be directly or indirectly interested in the true condition and distribution of the vast Villiers estates. Consequently the most natural avenue through which access to information upon this point could hopefully be sought, was *The Fairfax Papers*, which happened very seasonably about that period to be published. I, for *my* part, being no further interested in the inquiry than as regarded the pretended pauperism of the Duke, was satisfied with a brief extract made by a friend bearing on this single point. And this was sufficient, since it left no opening for doubt upon the extravagant fictions of Pope. But he, who may be interested in any further prosecution of the inquiry, will now understand what are *not* the books referred to as authorities, and what (so far as I know) really *is*.

would occur the remembrance of a Latin maxim which has arrested, and for two or three centuries seriously perplexed, the freedom of the pen with regard to persons having the rank and privileges of the dead: viz., the maxim of—*De Mortuis nil nisi bonum.* This adage, in the process of experience, was found entirely at war with the mere necessities of history, of biography, and, above all, the necessities of human sincerity in acts of daily intercourse. The call for a revisal of this erring maxim became loud and peremptory; and people fancied that at length they had reached the central truth when the maxim assumed the new and more humble form of *De mortuis nil nisi verum.* But very soon this form also was abandoned; for, if the right to insist upon truth in all comments upon themselves were made special to the dead, then what became of us—that extensive class of men that had not the advantage of being dead? Logically it was idle to speak of truth as a right even of the living, if by this new variety of the maxim, *nil nisi verum*, you had sharply limited the right to those who were in the grave. Nevertheless, no difficulty in harmonizing the pretensions of the dead and the living ever was allowed to unsettle the old faith that a peculiar tenderness of reverence and forbearance is due to those who lie helplessly at our feet, and can look for either truth or justice simply to the humanized condition of our nobler sensibilities.

The brutal and unprincipled outrage of Pope upon the slumbering Villiers, in which all the success that *could* have been anticipated lay in the dragging into broad daylight of a poor fellow-creature's imputed frailties, forcing them upwards "from their dread abode," and from that awful twilight of sad reminiscences to the foul theatrical glare of pantomimic exhibition, must in any case have

failed by its excess; and by miscalculation of times and seasons it failed even more than was probable. When the verses were published and dispersed over England, it was found that the age which owned an interest in the Duke of Buckingham had passed away: the acquaintances, friends or foes, whose faces would have

"Kindled, like a fire new-stirred,"

at the sound of the magical name *Villiers*, had by this time ranged on the scale of years all the way upward from 100 to 150. At the time when this particular series of verses first began to win a school popularity amongst the young ladies of England (viz., from 1775 or thereabouts, to the French Revolution), the name of the Buckingham family was becoming a distant and feeble echo for the ear of England. From Villiers, the Buckingham peerage in a new line was transmigrating to the Grenvilles. Had Pope's little personal *Idyll* therefore, when varnished and framed, been less revoltingly extravagant than it was, still the interest of satire had already faded from features alike and colours. To the multitude, the case read but as a variety of *The Prodigal Son*. Pope saddened over his own defeated malice. Villiers being at last a mere shadowy name, the man, his character and his history, were alike ciphers for the public ear: *locus standi* there no longer was for satiric passion. Pope's malice, in fact, had by mere lapse of time confounded itself. For all its expected effects the malice was extinct. But the malicious purpose and plan still survive under the attesting record of Pope's own sign and seal.

Peregrine meantime views Pope as exercising none but the most notorious and admitted rights in dealing with Buckingham, or with any other deceased man after any fashion suggested by his own malice, or by the clamorous call for impressive effects. But this doctrine is less singu-

lar than the argument by which he supports it. He contends that the right of a poet to disfigure and dishonour the memory of a deceased contemporary by groundless libels and lampoons is of the same nature, and is held by the same tenure, as the right of a Fabulist to introduce brutes, or even inanimate objects in the act of conversing and reasoning with each other; and that I, in denying most indignantly the alleged privilege of the libeller to intrude upon the sanctity of the grave by the foul scandals and falsehoods of private enmity, am precisely adopting the old crotchet of Rousseau on the danger of suffering children to read such fables. It is natural that *Peregrine* should recall Cowper's playful lines upon this occasion:

> "I shall not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau
> If birds confabulate, or no."

Since, in fact, Cowper it was through whom this caprice of Rousseau ever became known in England; for in the unventilated pages of its originator it would have lurked undisturbed down to this hour of June 1859. But it marks the excessive carelessness and inattention of *Peregrine* (faults that tell powerfully for mischief in cases like the present), that he goes on to quote some further lines from the same poet, which suddenly betray a kind of ignorance such as can be explained only out of Cowper's morbid timidity, and the feminine horror with which he shrank from the coarse or the violent in his intercourse with men. The lines, as I now remember them, are these—

> "But even a child that knows no better
> Than to interpret by the *letter*
> A story of a Cock and Bull,
> Must have a most uncommon skull."

These lines are forced by the mere logic of their position, which is that of reply to Rousseau, into a meaning entirely

at war with their notorious vernacular acceptation. "A story of a Cock and Bull" does not mean in England, as Cowper imagines, a story in which a cock audibly converses with a respondent bull, but has come conventionally to be understood as a story of which no man can make head or tail, and from which no rational drift or purpose can be disentangled.*

But all else which I had arraigned in Pope, as wanting in truth and good sense, faded into a bagatelle by the side of the fables which he had propounded as a reasonable hypothesis on the origin of our English literature. Pope, who never at any period of his life had a vestige of patriot-

* One must suppose that originally the eternal feud between France and England had formed the basis of the case; since the two *dramatis personæ*, our old obstinate friend Bull on the one side, and Chanticleer on the other—so brisk, so full of quarrel, of pugnacity, and of gallantry to his obsequious *harem*—could not have been selected as representatives of the alternate national interests without a distinct consciousness of the two national *arenas* concerned in this symbolization. Bull, as a symbol, is not so classically rooted as the Cock. For it cannot be traced higher than Swift, &c., and was never adopted or owned by the English people; so that it is a case of insufferable impertinence in Mr. Kossuth to speak of us under such a mere casual and unauthorized nickname. But the Cock, *Gallus Gallinaceus*, has always been the symbol chosen and consecrated by the Franco-Gallic people as their true adequate heraldic cognizance. An Englishman pauses in wonder. For undoubtedly the Cock embodies some favourable features of the French character and the French demeanour; but (as a keener spirit of discrimination would suggest) viewed under an angle of mockery and exaggeration. The bluster, the arrogance, the tendency to gasconade, are all there; there also is the indomitable courage; for amongst all breathing creatures there is hardly one (unless the bull-dog) more victorious over the passion of fear than the game cock. But still men generally would not relish a mirror held up even to their noblest qualities, if this were done under a concurrent attempt to throw cross lights of ridicule upon the total *ensemble* of their characters.

ism, would have sacrificed without compunction all possible trophies, intellectual or martial, of our national grandeur. He was never indisposed for such a service. But what gave him a sudden and decisive impulse in that direction, was the particular task in which he had just then engaged himself. He had undertaken a poetic version of that Epistle to Augustus Cæsar in which Horace traces the relations, alternately martial and intellectual, that connected Greece and Rome. It was a case of splendid retaliation. Rome, rude and uncultured, had led captive by her arms the polished race of Greeks. But immediately Greece had powerfully reacted upon her conqueror, and might be said in her turn, by arts, by literature, and civilisation, to have conquered *him*. Such was the picture of Horace. Pope had undertaken an adaptation to French and English circumstances of this Horatian epistle. He had pledged himself to reproduce in his translation such a parallelism between England and France, as should seem a mere echo to the case of instant retaliation recorded by the Roman poet. France had undeniably been conquered by England; so far, all was waterproof, but, to complete the parallelism, it was necessary that France should, in some intellectual way, have effected a deep compensating re-agency upon England. But *what* re-agency? Was it by fine arts, was it by mechanic arts, or how? No; it was (replies Pope) by literature. Pope does not explain whether the particular conquest of France, which he starts from, is that of Agincourt (1415), or that of Créci and Poictiers, some two or three generations earlier. But the impossibility, in which Pope has entangled himself, is the same for either case. There was no literature for the English to carry off; so that France could not have retaliated in the way supposed; and before the invention of printing, when literature, whether

Provençal, Aragonese, Italian, Breton, &c., chiefly embodied itself in music, no literature could offer a portable subject of transfer. But it is idle to waste a word on such a web of moonshine. France, having no literature for herself, could certainly give none to England. Of all this, when it was too late, Pope became painfully aware; and in his despair, he took the course of altogether shifting his reader's position.

The policy of Pope was to withdraw his reader's eye, as rapidly as possible, from the revolting paradox about Créci or Agincourt. And this purpose was so far attained by the sudden shifting of the ground from an era of French barbarism* to the polished period of Louis XIV. It might not be *true* of 1670, any more than of 1415, that England owed the least fraction of her intellectual development to the influence of French models. But, if not really more true as a fact, it was a thousand times more plausible as a possibility. The main purpose, therefore, of Pope, in this sudden leap over seven or ten generations, was answered. The reader no longer recoiled in disgust and alienation, when assured by Pope that Corneille, of whose uncongenial dramas not so much as one edition had ever been issued from an English press, might have raised or corrected the taste of some English generation. If such a case never had occurred, at least there was no shocking incongruity in supposing that it might have occurred in an age when books, both French and English, were largely multiplied. So far, that is in a chronological sense, Corneille met the momentary purpose of Pope, as well as any other of that period; other-

* "*Barbarism:*" We must not confound the comparative bright dawnings and promises of Aragon, of Provence, of Italy, of Brittany, &c., with the infantine pretensions of France, properly and strictly so called.

wise, there could not have been a more unfortunate selection. Even in France, Corneille had but a ten years' reign; for Racine completely superseded him, ever after the time when the French theatres had diffused a distinct knowledge of the discriminating characteristics between the two dramatists. Racine met the national taste genially by making the passion of love as indispensable an element in a scenical picture of life, as the French make it in the actual movements of life. Corneille, with his more masculine ideal of tragedy, was soon dethroned by Racine. Nor did he ever recover even a gleam of his original rank, until Voltaire early in the eighteenth century revived his fame, though not his popularity, by his advantageous criticisms on the separate merits of each poet. But if in France the loss of his stage rank soon clouded the splendours of Corneille, everywhere else he was entirely unknown. No name could have been cited by Pope less capable of stamping a durable impression upon the English mind. In reality, one decisive outstanding fact puts an end to all romances of this nature. It is this: If doubtfully you except Montaigne and Charron, as meditative writers much read by the more thoughtful among our men of the world, and Pascal, as a sort of pet with our religious ascetics, there never was any French author who established himself as even a limited favourite in England. Not one has achieved the lowest level of what can be called *popularity* amongst ourselves. If we except selections made by French teachers for mere purposes of convenience in relation to their pupils, I believe that no French classic has ever been reprinted in England. Students, therefore, of French literature, as any considerable body of *literati*, cannot at any time have existed among us. And thus not only are we entitled to dismiss the falsifications of

Pope on this theme as unworthy of serious attention, but also—which cuts deeper—we are entitled to treat, as an imbecile conceit, the pretence that there ever was amongst us in any age what is called *a French School* in any one department of literature.



LORD CARLISLE ON POPE.

LORD CARLISLE's recent lecture upon Pope, addressed to an audience of artisans, drew the public attention first of all upon himself; *that* was inevitable. No man can depart conspicuously from the usages or the apparent sympathies of his own class, under whatsoever motive, but that of necessity he will awaken for the *immediate* and the first result of his act an emotion of curiosity. But all curiosity is allied to the comic, and is not an ennobling emotion, either for him who feels it, or for him who is its object. A second, however, and more thoughtful consideration of such an act may redeem it from this vulgarizing taint of oddity. Reflection may satisfy us, as in the present case it *did* satisfy those persons who were best acquainted with Lord Carlisle's public character, that this eccentric step had been adopted, not in ostentation, with any view to its eccentricity, but *in spite of* its eccentricity, and from impulses of large prospective benignity that would not suffer itself to be defeated by the chances of immediate misconstruction.

Whether advantageous, therefore, to Lord Carlisle, or disadvantageous (and in that case, I believe, most unjust), the first impressions derived from this remarkable lecture pointed themselves exclusively to the person of the lecturer —to his general qualifications for such a task, and to his

possible motives for undertaking it. Nobody inquired *what* it was that the noble Lord had been discussing, so great was every man's astonishment that before such an audience any noble Lord should have condescended to discuss anything at all. But gradually all wonder subsides, *de jure*, in nine days; and, after this collapse of the primary interest, there was leisure for a secondary interest to gather about the *subject* of the patrician lecture. Had it any cryptical meaning? Coming from a man so closely connected with the Government, could it be open to any hiero glyphic or ulterior interpretations, intelligible to Whigs and significant to ministerial partisans? Finally, this secondary interest has usurped upon what originally had been a purely personal interest. POPE! What novelty was there, still open to even literary gleaners, about *him*, a man that had been in his grave for 106 years? What *could* there remain to say on such a theme? And what was it, in fact, that Lord Carlisle *had* said to his Yorkshire audience?

There was, therefore, a double aspect in the public interest; one looking to the rank of the lecturer, one to the singularity of his theme. There was the curiosity that connected itself with the assumption of a troublesome duty in the service of the lowest ranks by a volunteer from the highest; and, secondly, there was another curiosity connecting itself with the choice of a subject that had no special reference to this particular generation, and seemed to have no special adaptation to the intellectual capacities of a working audience.

This double aspect of the public surprise suggests a double question. The volunteer assumption by a nobleman of this particular office in this particular service may, in the eyes of some people, bear a philosophic value, as though it

indicated some changes going on beneath the surface of society in the relations of our English aristocracy to our English labouring body. On the other hand, it will be regarded by multitudes as the casual caprice of an individual; a caprice of vanity by those who do not know Lord Carlisle's personal qualities, a caprice of patriotic benevolence by those who do. According to the construction of the case as thus indicated, oscillating between a question of profound revolution moving subterraneously amongst us, and a purely personal question, such a discussion would ascend to the philosophic level, or sink to the level of gossip. The other direction of the public surprise points to a question that will interest a far greater body of thinkers. Whatever judgment may be formed on the general fact that a nobleman of ancient descent has thought fit to come forward as a lecturer to the humblest of his countrymen upon subjects detached from politics, there will yet remain a call for a second judgment upon the fitness of the particular subject selected for a lecture under such remarkable circumstances. The two questions are entirely disconnected. It is on the latter, viz., the character and pretensions of Pope, as selected by Lord Carlisle for such an inaugural experiment, that I myself feel much interest. Universally it must have been felt as an objection, that such a selection had no special adaptation to the age or to the audience. I say this with no wish to undervalue the lecture, which I understand to have been ably composed, nor the services of the lecturer, whose motives and public character, in common with most of his countrymen, I admire. I speak of it at all only as a public opportunity suddenly laid open for drawing attention to the true pretensions of Pope, as the most brilliant writer of his own class in European literature; or, at least, of drawing attention to some characteristics in the most popu-

lar section of Pope's works which hitherto have lurked unnoticed.

This is my object, and none that can be supposed personal to Lord Carlisle. Pope, as the subject of the lecture, and not the earlier question as to the propriety of any lecture at all, under the circumstances recited, furnishes my *thesis*—that thesis on which the reader will understand me to speak with decision, not with the decision of arrogance, but with that which rightfully belongs to a faithful study of the author. The editors of Pope are not all equally careless, but all are careless; and, under the shelter of this carelessness, the most deep-seated vices of Pope's moral and satirical sketches have escaped detection, or at least have escaped exposure. These, and the other errors traditionally connected with the rank and valuation of Pope as a classic, are what I profess to speak of deliberately and firmly. Meantime, to the extent of a few sentences, I will take the liberty of suggesting, rather than delivering, an opinion upon the other question, viz., the prudence in a man holding Lord Carlisle's rank of lecturing at all to any public audience. But on this part of the subject I beg to be understood as speaking doubtfully, conjecturally, and without a sufficient basis of facts.

The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, notoriously a man of great ingenuity, possessing also prodigious fertility of thought, and armed with the rare advantage of being almost demoniacally in earnest, was, however (in some sort of balance to these splendid gifts), tainted to excess with the scrofula of impracticable crotchets. That was the opinion secretly held about him by most of his nearest friends; and it is notorious that he scarcely ever published a pamphlet or contribution to a journal in which he did not contrive to offend all parties, both friendly and hostile, by some ebullition of

this capricious character. He hated, for instance, the High Church with a hatred more than theological; and *that* would have recommended him to the favourable consideration of many thousands of persons in this realm, the same who have been secretly foremost in the recent outbreak of fanaticism against the Roman Catholics; but unfortunately it happened that, although not hating the Low Church (the self styled evangelicals), he despised them so profoundly as to make all alliance between them impossible. He hated also many individuals; but, not to do him any injustice, most (or perhaps all) of these were people that had been long dead; and amongst them, by the way, was Livy the historian: whom I distinguish by name, as furnishing, perhaps, the liveliest illustration of the whimsical and all but lunatic excess to which these personal hatreds were sometimes pushed; for it is a fact that, when the course of an Italian tour had brought him unavoidably to the birth-place of Livy, Dr. Arnold felicitated himself upon having borne the air of that city; in fact, upon having survived such a collision with the local remembrances of the poor historian, very much in those terms which Mr. Governor Holwell might have used on finding himself "pretty bobbish" on the morning after the memorable night in the Black Hole of Calcutta: he could hardly believe that he still lived.* And yet, how had the eloquent historian trespassed on his patience and his weak powers of toleration? Livy was certainly not very learned in the archæologics of his own country; where all men had gone astray, *he* went astray. And in geography, as regarded

* A similar instance of a craze beyond the bounds of perfect physical sanity may be found in Dr. Arnold's nervous paroxysm of horror on hearing St. Paul placed on a level with St. John the Evangelist.

the Italian movements of Hannibal, he erred with his eyes open. But these were no objects of Livy's ambition: what he aspired to do was, to tell the story, "the tale divine," of Roman energy and perseverance; and *he so* told it that no man, as regards the mere artifices of narration, would ever have presumed to tell it after him. I cite this particular case as illustrating the furnace-heat of Dr. Arnold's antipathies, unless where some consideration of kindness and Christian charity interposed to temper his fury. This check naturally offered itself only with regard to individuals: and therefore, in dealing with institutions, he acknowledged no check at all, but gave full swing to the license of his wrath. Amongst our own institutions, that one which he seems most profoundly to have hated was our nobility; or, speaking more generally, our aristocracy. Some deadly aboriginal schism he seems to have imagined between this order and the democratic orders; some predestined feud as between the head of the serpent and the heel of man. Accordingly, as one of the means most clamorously invoked by our social position for averting some dreadful convulsion constantly brooding over England, he insists upon a closer approximation between our highest classes and our lowest. Especially, he seems to think that the peasantry needed to be conciliated by more familiar intercourse, or more open expressions of interest in their concerns, and by domiciliary visits not offered in too oppressive a spirit of condescension. But the close observer of our social condition will differ with Dr Arnold at starting, as to the facts. The ancient territorial nobility are not those who offend by *hauteur*. On the contrary, a spirit of parental kindness marks the intercourse of the old authentic aristocracy with their dependants, and especially with the two classes of peasants on their own estates, and their domestic

servants.* Those who *really* offend on this point, are the *nouveaux riches*—the *parvenus*. And yet it would be great injustice to say that even these offend habitually. No laws of classification are so false as those which originate in human scurrility. Aldermen, until very lately, were by an old traditional scurrility so proverbially classed as gluttons and cormorants, hovering over dinner-tables, with no other characteristics whatever, or openings to any redeeming qualities, that men became as seriously perplexed in our days at meeting an eloquent, enlightened, and accomplished alderman, as they would have been by an introduction to a benevolent cut-throat, or a patriotic incendiary. The same thing happened in ancient days. Quite as obstinate as any modern prejudice against a London alderman was the old Attic prejudice against the natives of Bœotia. Originally it had grown up under two causes—1st, The animosities incident to neighbourhood too close; 2dly, The difference of bodily constitution consequent upon a radically different

* And by the way, as to servants, a great man may offend in two ways: either by treating his servants himself superciliously; or, secondly, which is quite reconcilable with the most paternal behaviour on his own part, by suffering them to treat the public superciliously. Accordingly, all novelists who happen to have no acquaintance with the realities of life as it now exists, especially, therefore, rustic novelists, describe the servants of noblemen as "insolent and pampered menials." But, on the contrary, at no houses whatever are persons of doubtful appearance and anomalous costume sure of more respectful attention than at those of the great feudal aristocracy. At a merchant's or a banker's house, it is odds but the porter or the footman will govern himself in his behaviour by his own private construction of the case, which (as to foreigners) is pretty sure to be wrong. But in London, at a nobleman's door, the servants show, by the readiness of their civilities to all such questionable comers, that they have taken their lesson from a higher source than their own inexperience or unlearned fancies.

descent. The blood was different; and by a wider and elder difference than that between Celtic and Teutonic. The garrulous Athenian despised the hesitating (but for that reason more reflecting) Bœotian; and this feeling was carried so far, that at last it provoked satire itself to turn round with scorn upon the very prejudice which the spirit of satire had originally kindled. Disgusted with this arrogant assumption of disgust, the Roman satirist reminded the scorners that men not inferior to the greatest of their own had been bred, or might be bred, amongst those whom they scorned:—

> "Summos posse viros, et magna exempla daturos,
> Vervecum in patriâ, crassoque sub aëre nasci."

Now, if there is any similar alienation between our lowest classes and our highest, such as Dr. Arnold imagined to exist in England, at least it does not assume any such character of disgust, nor clothe itself in similar expressions of scorn. Practical jealousy, so far as it exists at all, lies between classes much less widely separated. The master manufacturer is sometimes jealous of those amongst his ministerial agents who tread too nearly upon his own traces; he is jealous sometimes of their advances in domestic refinement, he is jealous of their aspirations after a higher education. And, on *their* part, the workmen are apt to regard their masters as having an ultimate interest violently conflicting with their own. In these *strata* of society there really *are* symptoms of mutual distrust and hostility. Capital and the aristocracy of wealth is a standing object of suspicion, of fear, and therefore of angry irritation to the working-classes. But as to the aristocracy of rank and high birth, either it is little known to those classes, as happens in the most populous hives of our manu-

facturing industry, and is regarded, therefore, with no positive feeling of any kind, or else, as in the more exclusively agricultural and pastoral districts, is looked up to by the peasantry with blind feelings of reverence as amongst the immemorial monuments of the past—involved in one common mist of antiquity with the rivers and the hills of the district, with the cathedrals and their own ancestors. A half-religious sentiment of reverence for an old time-out-off' mind family associated with some antique residence, hall, or abbey, or castle, is a well-known affection of the rural mind in England; and if in one half it points to an infirmity not far off from legendary superstition, in the other half it wears the grace of chivalry and legendary romance. And malignant scoff, therefore, against the peerage of England, such as calling the House of Lords a Hospital of Incur ables, has always been a town-bred scurrility, not only never adopted by the simple rural labourer, but not even known to him, or distinctly intelligible supposing it were.

If, therefore, there are great convulsions lying in wait for the framework of our English society; if, and more in sorrow than in hope, some vast attempt may be anticipated for re-casting the whole of our social organization; and if it is probable that this attempt will commence in the blind wrath of maddened or despairing labour—still there is no ground for thinking, with Dr. Arnold, that this wrath, however blind (unless treacherously misled), would apply itself primarily to the destruction of our old landed aristocracy. It would often find itself grievously in error and self-baffled, even when following its first headlong impulses of revenge; but these are the impulses that it *would* follow, and none of these would primarily point in an aristocratic direction. Suppose, however, that the probabilities were different, and that a policy of conciliation were become peculiarly needful to

the aristocracy—which is what Dr. Arnold supposes—in that case might not the course indicated by Lord Carlisle, viz., advancing upon a new line of *intellectual* communication with the labouring classes, be the surest mode of retrieving their affections, as most likely to flatter their self-esteem in its noblest aspirations?

One swallow, it is true, cannot make a summer; and others of the aristocracy must repeat the experiment of Lord Carlisle before any ground can be won for the interests of the order. Even in Lord Carlisle, it might be added, the experiment, if it were not followed up, would not count for more than a caprice. But, on the other hand, think as we may of the probable results, in reference to the *purposes* of its author, we ought to regard it as a sufficient justification that *thus* the ice has been broken, that *thus* a beginning has been made, and *thus* a sanction established under which no man, if otherwise free to enter upon such a path, needs ever again to find an obstacle in rank the highest or in blood the most ancient. He is authorized by a Howard; and though doubts must still linger about the propriety of such a course, when estimated as a means to a specific end, yet for itself, in reference to the prudery of social decorum, we may now pronounce that to lecture without fee or reward before any audience whatever is henceforth privileged by authentic precedent; and, unless adulterating with political partisanship, is consecrated by its own noble purposes.

Still, if it be urged that these noble purposes are not ratified and sealed by a solitary experiment, I should answer that undoubtedly Lord Carlisle has placed himself under a silent obligation to renew his generous effort; or, in the event of his failing to do so, will have made himself a debtor to public censure, as one who has planned what he

has not been strong enough to accomplish, and has founded a stair-case or a portico to a temple yet in the clouds. *Had* he the ulterior purposes assumed? Then by deserting or neglecting them, he puts on record the instability of his own will. Had he *not* these ulterior purposes? Then, and in that confession, vanishes into vapour the whole dignity of his bold pretensions, as the navigator who first doubled the Cape of Storms* into an untried sea.

But against a man dealing presumably with a noble purpose we should reckon nobly. Mean jealousies have no place in circumstances where, as yet, no meanness has been exhibited. The exaction would be too severe upon Lord Carlisle if, by one act of kindness, he had pledged himself to a thousand; and if, because once his graciousness had been conspicuous, he were held bound over, in all time coming, to the unintermitting energies of a missionary amongst pagans. The labouring men of Yorkshire have not the clamorous necessities of pagans; and *therefore* Lord Carlisle has not assumed the duties of a working missionary. When, by personally coming forward to lecture, he inaugurated a new era of intellectual prospects for the sons of toil, implicitly he promised that he would himself, from time to time, come forward to co-operate with a movement that had owed its birth to his own summons and impulse. But if he cannot honourably release himself from engagements voluntarily assumed, on the other hand he cannot justly be loaded with the responsibility of a continued parti-

* "Cape of Storms," which should *primâ facie* be the Cape of Terrors. But it bears a deep allegoric sense to the bold wrestler with such terrors, that in English, and at length to all the world, this Cape of Terrors has transfigured itself into the Cape of *Good Hope*.

cipation in the details of the work which he has set in motion. By sympathy with the liberal purposes of an intullectual movement he gives to that movement its initial impulse. Henceforward it suffices if at intervals he continues to it such expressions of the same sympathy as may sustain its original activity, or at least may sustain the credit of his own consistency. It cannot be expected that any person in the circumstances of Lord Carlisle should continue even intermittingly to lecture. It is enough if, by any other modes of encouragement, or by inciting others to follow the precedent which he has set, he continues to express an unabated interest in the great cause of intellectual progress amongst poor men.

A doubt may be raised, meantime, whether literature is the proper channel into which the intellectual energies of the poor should be directed. For the affirmative it may be urged, that the interest in literature is universal, whilst the interest in science is exceedingly limited. On the other hand, it may truly be retorted that the scientific interest may be artificially extended by culture; and that these two great advantages would in that case arise—1. That the apparatus of means and instruments is much smaller in the one case than the other; 2. That science opens into a *progression* of growing interest; whereas literature, having no determined order of advance, and offering no regular succession of stages to the student, does not with the same certainty secure a self-maintaining growth of pleasurable excitement. Some remedy, however, will be applied to this last evil, if a regular plan of *study* should ever be devised for literature; and perhaps that may be found not impossible.

But now, coming to the second question, namely, this question, *If any lecture at all, why upon Pope?* We may see reason to think that Lord Carlisle was in error. To

make a choice which is not altogether the best will not of necessity argue an error; because much must be allowed to constitutional differences of judgment or of sensibility, which may be all equally right as against any philosophic attempts to prove any one of them wrong. And a lecturer who is possibly aware of not having made the choice which was absolutely best may defend himself upon the ground that accidental advantages of a personal kind, such as previous familiarity with the subject, or pre-conformity of taste to the characteristic qualities of the author selected, may have qualified him to lecture on that theme with more effect and with more benefit than upon a theme confessedly higher but less tractable for himself with his own peculiar preparations. Here, however, the case is different. What might be no error *per se*, becomes one if the special circumstances of the situation show it to have rested upon a deep misconception. Given the audience which Lord Carlisle had before him, the audience which he anticipated, and which he proposed to himself as the modulating law for the quality and style of his lecture, that same choice becomes a profound error which, for a different audience, more refined or more miscellaneous, would have been no error at all. I do not fear that I shall offend Lord Carlisle, so upright as he has always shown himself, so manly, and so faithful to his own views of truth, by repeating firmly that such a choice in such a situation argues a deep misconception of the true intellectual agencies by which Pope acts as a power in literature, and of the moral relations to general human sensibilities or *universal* nature which such agencies involve. My belief is, that if a prize had been offered for a bad and malappropriate subject, none worse could have been suggested; unless, perhaps, it had been the letters of Madame de Sevigne, or the fables of La Fontaine; in both of which

cases the delicacies and subtle felicities of treatment are even more microscopic, more shy, and more inapprehensible without a special training and culture, than in Pope. And in this point they all agree, with no great difference amongst the three, that the sort of culture which forms the previous condition for enjoying them (a *conditio sine qua non*) is not of a kind to be won from study. Even of *that* a mechanic artisan, whose daily bread depends upon his labour, cannot have had much. But the dedication of a life to books would here avail but little. What is needed must be the sort of culture won from complex social intercourse; and of this the labouring artisan can have had none at all. Even the higher ranks, during those stages of society when social meetings are difficult, are rare, and consequently have their whole intellectual opportunities exhausted in forms and elaborate ceremonials, are not able to develop what may be called the social sense, that living, trembling sensibility to the expressions and the electric changes of human thought and feeling, so infinite as they are potentially, and as they will show themselves to be when the intercourse is free, is sudden, is spontaneous, and therefore has not leisure to be false, amongst all varieties of combination as to sex, age, rank, position, and personal accomplishments. Up to the time of James I., society amongst ourselves wore a picturesque and even a scenical exterior: but the inner life and its pulsations had not then been revealed. Great passions were required to stir the freezing waters; so that certain kinds of comedy, in which such passions are inappropriate, could not then exist. And partly to this cause it was amongst the early Romans, united with the almost Asiatic seclusion from social meetings of female influence or in any virtual sense even of female presence, that we must ascribe the meagreness of the

true social interest, and of the dialogue exhibited by Plautus. Two separate frosts, during a century otherwise so full of movement as the sixteenth in England, repressed and killed all germinations of free intellectual or social intercourse amongst ourselves. One was the national reserve; and this was strengthened by concurring with a national temperament which is not phlegmatic (as is so falsely alleged), but melancholic, and for that reason, if there had been no other, anti-mercurial. But the main cause of this reserve lay in the infrequency of visits consequent upon the difficulties of local movement. The other frost lay at *that* time in the Spanish stateliness and the rigour of our social ceremonies. Our social meetings of this period, even for purposes of pleasure, were true *solemnities*. With usages of politeness that laid a weight of silence and delay upon every movement of a convivial company, rapid motion of thought or fancy became *physically* impossible. Not until, first, our *capital* city had prodigiously expanded; not until, secondly, our representative system had so unfolded its tendencies as to bring *politics* within the lawful privilege of ordinary conversation; not until, thirdly, the expansions of *commerce* had forced us into the continual necessity of talking with strangers; fourthly, not until all these changes, gradually breaking up the repulsion which separated our ungarrulous nation, had been ratified by continual improvements applied to the construction of *roads* and the arts of *locomotion*, could it be said that such a state of social intercourse existed as would naturally prompt the mind to seek food for its own intellectual activity in contemplating the phenomena of that intercourse. The primary aspects and the rapid changes of such an object could not arise until the object itself arose. Satire, which follows social intercourse as a shadow follows a body, was chained up till

then. In Marston and in Donne (a man yet unappreciated) satire first began to respire freely, but applying itself too much, as in the great dramatists contemporary with Shakspere, to the exterior play of society. Under Charles II. in the hands of Dryden, and under Anne in those of Pope, the larger and more intellectual sweep of satire showed that social activities were now approaching to their culmination. Now, at length, it became evident that a new mode of pleasure had been ripened, and that a great instinct of the intellect had opened for itself an appropriate channel. No longer were social parties the old heraldic solemnities enjoined by red letters in the almanac, in which the chief objects were to discharge some arrear of ceremonious debt, or to ventilate old velvets, or to *apricate* and refresh old gouty systems and old traditions of feudal ostentation, which both alike suffered and grew smoke-dried under too rigorous a seclusion. By a great transmigration, festal assemblages had assumed their proper station, and had unfolded their capacities, as true auxiliaries to the same general functions of intellect—otherwise expressing themselves and feeding themselves through literature, through the fine arts, and through scenic representations. A new world of pleasures had opened itself, offering new subjects of activity to the intellect, but also presupposing a new discipline and experience for enjoying them.

Precisely at this point starts off what I presume to think the great error of Lord Carlisle. He postulates as if it were a mere gift of inevitable instinct, what too certainly is the gift, and the tardy gift, of training; which training, again, is not to be won from efforts of study, but is in the nature of a slow deposition—or sediment as it were—from a constant, perhaps at the moment, an unconscious experience. Apparently the error is twofold; first, an oversight,

in which it is probable that, without altogether overlooking the truth, Lord Carlisle allowed to it a very insufficient emphasis; but, secondly, a positive misconception of a broad character. The oversight is probably his own, and originating in a general habit of too large and liberal concession; but the misconception, I suspect, that he owes to another.

First, concerning the first. It is evidently assumed, in the adoption of Pope for his subject, that mechanic artists, as a body, are capable of appreciating Pope. I deny it; and in this I offer them no affront. If they cannot enjoy, or if often they cannot so much as understand Pope, on the other hand they can both enjoy and understand a far greater poet. It is no insult; but, on the contrary, it is often a secret compliment to the simplicity and the *breadth* of a man's intellectual nature that he cannot enter into the artificial, the tortuous, the conventional. Many a rude mind has comprehended to the full both Milton in his elementary grandeur and Shakspere in his impassioned depths, that could not have even dimly guessed at the meaning of a situation in comedy where the comic rested upon arbitrary rules and conventional proprieties. In all satiric sketches of society, even where the direct object may happen to have a catholic intelligibility, there is much amongst the allusions that surround and invest it which no man will ever understand that has not personally mixed in society, or understand without very disproportional commentaries; and even in that case he will not enjoy it. This is true of such compositions as a class; but Pope, in reference to this difficulty, is disadvantageously distinguished even amongst his order. Dryden, for instance, is far larger and more capacious in his satire, and in all the genial parts would approach the level of universal sympathies;

whereas Pope, besides that the basis of his ridicule is continually too narrow, local, and casual, is rank to utter corruption with a disease far deeper than false refinement or conventionalism. Pardon me, reader, if I use a coarse word and a malignant word, which I should abhor to use unless where, as in this case, I seek to rouse the vigilance of the inattentive by the apparent intemperance of the language. Pope, in too many instances, for the sake of some momentary and farcical effect, deliberately assumes the license of a *liar*. Not only he adopts the language of moral indignation where we know that it could not possibly have existed, seeing that the story to which this pretended indignation is attached was to Pope's knowledge a pure fabrication, but he also cites, as weighty evidences in the *forum* of morality, anecdotes which he had gravely transplanted from a jest-book.* Upon this, however, the most

* "I give and I bequeath, old Euclio said"—and the ridiculous story of the dying epicure insisting upon having his luxurious dish brought back to his death-bed (for why not? since at any rate, eating or not eating, he was doomed to die) are amongst the lowest rubbish of jest-books, having done duty for the Christian and the Pagan worlds through a course of eighteen centuries. Not to linger upon the nursery silliness that could swallow the legend of epicureanism surviving up to the very brink of the grave, and when even the hypocrisy of *medical* hope had ceased to flatter, what a cruel memento of the infirmity charged upon himself was Pope preparing whilst he intended nothing worse than a falsehood! He meant only to tell a lie; naturally, perhaps, saying to himself—What's one lie more or less? And behold, if his friends are to be believed, he was unconsciously writing a sort of hieroglyphic epitaph for his own tombstone. Dr. Johnson's taste for petty gossip was so keen, that I distrust all his anecdotes. That Pope killed himself by potted lampreys, which he had dressed with his own hands, I greatly doubt; but if anything inclines me to believe it, chiefly it is the fury of his invectives against epicures and gluttons. What most of all he attacked as a moralist was the particular vice which most of all besieged him.

painful feature amongst Pope's literary habits, I will not dwell, as I shall immediately have occasion to notice it again. I notice it at all only for its too certain effect in limiting the sympathy with Pope's satiric and moral writings. Absolute truth and simplicity are demanded by all of us as preconditions to any sympathy with moral expressions of anger or intolerance. In all conventionalism there is a philosophic falsehood; and *that* would be more than sufficient to repel all general sympathy with Pope from the mind of the labouring man, apart from the effect of direct falsification applied to facts, or of fantastic extravagance applied to opinions. Of this bar to the popularity of Pope it cannot be supposed that Lord Carlisle was unaware. Doubtless he knew it, but did not allow it the weight which in practice it would be found to deserve. Yet why? Suppose that the unpopular tendency in Pope's writings were of a nature to be surmounted—upon a sufficient motive arising, suppose it not absolutely impossible to bring Pope within the toleration of working men, upon whom, however, all that is bad would tell fearfully, and most of Pope's peculiar brilliancy would absolutely go for nothing—this notwithstanding, suppose the point established that by huge efforts, by coaxing and flattering, and *invitâ Minervâ*, the working-man might at length be *converted* to Pope; yet, finally, when all was over, what object, what commensurate end, could be alleged in justification of so much preternatural effort? You have got your man into harness, that is true, and in a sullen fashion he pulls at his burden. But, after all, why not have yoked him according to his own original inclinations, and suffered him to pull where he would pull, cheerfully? You have quelled a natural resistance, but clearly with so much loss of power to all parties as was spent upon the resistance; and with what final gain to any party?

The answer to this lies in the second of the errors which I have imputed to Lord Carlisle. The first error was, perhaps, no more than an undervaluation of the truth. The second, if I divine it rightly, rests upon a total misconception, viz., the attribution to Pope of some special authority as a moral teacher. And this, if it were really true, would go far to justify Lord Carlisle in his attempt to fix the attention of literary students amongst the working-classes upon the writings of Pope. Rightly he would judge, that some leading classic must furnish the central object for the general studies. Each man would have his own separate favourites; but it would be well that the whole community of students should also have some *common* point of interest and discussion. Pope, for such a purpose, has some real advantages. He is far enough from our own times to stand aloof from the corroding controversies of the age; he is near enough to speak in a diction but slightly differing from our own. He is sparkling with wit and brilliant good sense, and his poems are all separately short. But if Lord Carlisle count it for his main advantage that he is by distinction a *moral* poet, and this I must suppose in order to find any solution whatever for the eagerness to press him upon the attention of our most numerous classes, where is it that this idea has originated? I suspect that it is derived originally from a distinguished man of genius in the last generation, viz., Lord Byron. Amongst the guardians of Lord Byron one was the late Lord Carlisle; and Lord Byron was, besides, connected by blood with the House of Howard; so that there were natural reasons why a man of such extraordinary intellectual splendour should easily obtain a profound influence over the present Earl of Carlisle. And the prejudice, which I suppose to have been first planted by Lord Byron, would readily strengthen itself by the general

cast of Pope's topics and pretensions. He writes with a showy air of disparaging riches, of doing homage to private worth, of honouring patriotism, and so on, through all the commonplaces of creditable morality. But in the midst of this surface display, and in defiance of his ostentatious pretensions, Pope is *not* in any deep or sincere sense a moral thinker; and in his own heart there was a misgiving, not to be silenced, that he was not.

Yet this is strange. Surely Lord Carlisle, a man of ability and experience, might have credit given him for power to form a right judgment on such a question as that; *power* undoubtedly, if he had ever been led to use his power, that is, to make up his opinion in *resistance* to the popular impression. But to this very probably he never had any motive; and the reason why I presume to set up my individual opinion in this case against that of the multitude is, because I know experimentally that, until a man has a sincere interest in such a question, and sets himself diligently to examine and collate the facts, he will pretty certainly have no right to give any verdict on the case.

What made Lord Byron undertake the patronage of Pope? It was, as usually happened with *him*, a motive of hostility to some contemporaries. He wished to write up Pope by way of writing down others. But, whatever were the motive, we may judge of the style in which he carried out his intentions by the following well-known *mot*. Having mentioned the poets, he compares them with the moralists; "the moralists," these are his words, "the moralists, their betters." How, or in what sense that would satisfy even a lampooner, are moralists as a class the "betters" in a collation with poets as a class? It is pretty clear at starting that, *in order* to be a moralist of the first rank, that is, to carry a great moral truth with heart-shaking force into the

mind, a moralist must begin by becoming a poet. For instance, "to justify the ways of God to man." *That* is a grand moral doctrine; but to utter the doctrine authentically, and with power, a man must write a "Paradise Lost." The order of precedency, therefore, between poets and moralists, as laid down by Lord Byron, is very soon inverted by a slight effort of reflection.

But without exacting from a man so self-willed as Lord Byron (and at that moment in a great passion) any philosophic rigour, it may be worth while, so far as the case concerns Pope, to ponder for one moment upon this invidious comparison, and to expose the fallacy which it conceals. By the term *moralist* we indicate two kinds of thinkers, differing as much in quality as a chesnut horse from a horse chesnut, and in rank as a Roman proconsul from the nautical consul's first clerk at a sea-port. A clerical moralist in a pulpit, reading a sermon, is a moralist in the sense of one who applies the rules of a known ethical system, viz., that system which is contained in the New Testament, to the ordinary cases of human action. Such a man pretends to no originality; it would be criminal in him to do so; or, if he seeks for novelty in any shape and degree, it is exclusively in the quality of his illustrations. But there is another use of the word *moralist*, which indicates an intellectual architect of the first class. A Grecian moralist was one who published a new *theory* of morals; that is, he assumed some new central principle, from which he endeavoured, with more or less success, to derive all the virtues and vices, and thus introduced new relations amongst the keys or elementary gamut of our moral nature.* For ex-

* Upon this principle I doubt not that we should interpret the sayings attributed to the seven wise men of Greece. If we regard them as insulated aphorisms, they strike us all as mere impertinences;

ample, the Peripatetic system of morality, that of Aristotle, had for its fundamental principle, that all vices formed one or other of two polar extremes, one pole being in excess, the other in defect; and that the corresponding virtue lay on an equatorial line between these two poles. Here, because the new principle became a law of coercion for the entire system, since it must be carried out harmoniously with regard to every element that could move a question, the difficulties were great, and hardly to be met by mere artifices of ingenuity. The legislative principle needed to be profound and comprehensive; and a moralist in this sense, the founder of an ethical system, really looked something like a creative philosopher.

But, valued upon that scale, Pope is nobody; or in Newmarket language, if ranked against Chrysippus, or Plato, or Aristotle, or Epicurus, he would be found "nowhere." He is reduced, therefore, at one blow to the level of a

for by what right is some one prudential admonition separately illuminated and left as a solemn legacy to all posterity in slight of others equally cogent? For instance, *Meden agan*—nothing in excess—is a maxim not to be neglected, but still not entitled to the exclusive homage which is implied in its present acceptation. The mistake, meantime, I believe to be, not in the Grecian pleiad of sages, but in ourselves, who have falsely apprehended them. The man, for instance (Bias was it, or who?), that left me this old saw about excess, did not mean to bias me in favour of that one moral caution; this would have argued a craze in favour of one element amongst many. What he meant was, to indicate the *radix* out of which his particular system was expanded. It was the key-note out of which, under the laws of thorough-bass, were generated the whole chord and its affinities. Whilst the whole evolution of the system was in lively remembrance, there needed no more than this short-hand memento for recalling it. But now, when the lapse of time has left the little maxim stranded on a shore of wrecks, naturally it happens that what was in old days the key-stone of an arch has come to be compounded with its superfluous rubbish.

pulpit moralist, or mere applier of moral laws to human actions. And in a function so exceedingly humble, philosophically considered, how could he pretend to precedency in respect of anybody, unless it were the amen clerk, or the sexton?

In reality, however, the case is worse. If a man did really bring all human actions under the light of any moral system whatever, provided that he *could* do so sternly, justly, and without favour this way or that, he would perform an exemplary service such as no man ever *has* performed. And this is what we mean by casuistry, which is the application of a moral principle to the *cases* arising in human life. A *case* means a generic class of human acts, but differentiated in the way that law cases are. For we see that every case in the law courts conforms in the major part to the generic class; but always, or nearly always, it presents some one differential feature peculiar to itself; and the question about it always is, Whether the differential feature is sufficient to take it out of the universal rule, or whether, in fact, it ought not to disturb the incidence of the legal rule? This is what we mean by casuistry. All law in its practical processes is a mode of casuistry. And it is clear that any practical ethics, ethics applied to the realities of life, ought to take the professed shape of casuistry. We do not evade the thing by evading the name. But because casuistry, under that name, has been chiefly cultivated by the Roman Catholic Church, we Protestants, with our ridiculous prudery, find a stumbling-block in the very name. This, however, is the only service that *can* be rendered to morality among us. And nothing approaching to this has been attempted by Pope.

What is it, then, that he *has* attempted? Certainly he imagines himself to have done something or other in behalf

of moral philosophy. For in a well-known couplet he informs us—

> "That not in Fancy's maze he linger'd long,
> But stoop'd to Truth, and *moralised* his song."

Upon these lines a lady once made to me this very acute and significant remark. The particular direction, she said, in which Pope fancied that he came upon Truth, showed pretty clearly what sort of truth it was that he searched after. Had he represented Fancy, as often is done, soaring aloft amongst the clouds, then, because Truth must be held to lie in the opposite direction, there might have been pleaded a necessity for *descending* upon Truth, like one who is looking for mushrooms. But as fancy, by good luck, is simply described as roaming about amongst labyrinths, which are always constructed upon dead levels, he had left it free for himself to soar after Truth into the clouds. But *that* was a mode of truth which Pope cared little for; if *she* chose to go galavanting amongst the clouds, Pope, for *his* part, was the last person to follow her. Neither was he the man to go down into a well in search of her. Truth was not liable to wet feet, but Pope *was*. And he had no such ardour for Truth as would ever lead him to forget that wells were damp, and bronchitis alarming to a man of his constitution.

Whatever service Pope may have meditated to the philosophy of morals, he has certainly performed none. The direct contributions which he offered to this philosophy in his "Essay on Man," are not of a nature to satisfy any party; because at present the whole system may be read into different, and sometimes into opposite meanings, according to the quality of the integrations supplied for filling up the chasms in the chain of the development. The sort of service, however, expected from Pope in such a field,

falls in better with the style of his satires and moral epistles than of a work professedly metaphysical. Here, however, most eminently it is that the falseness and hypocrisy which besieged his satirical career have made themselves manifest; and the dilemma for any working man who should apply himself to these sections of Pope's writings is precisely this: Reading them with the slight and languid attention which belongs to ordinary reading, he will make no particular discoveries of Pope's hollowness and infidelities to the truth, whether as to things or persons; but in such a case neither will he reap any benefit. On the other hand, if he so far carry out Lord Carlisle's advice as to enter upon the study of Pope in the spirit of an earnest student, and so as really to possess himself of the key to Pope's inner mind, he will rise from his labours not so much in any spirit of gratitude for enlarged and humanizing views of man, as in a spirit of cynical disgust at finding that such views can be so easily counterfeited, and so often virtually betrayed.

Whom shall we pronounce a fit writer to be laid before an auditory of working men, as a model of what is just in composition—fit either for conciliating their regard to literature at first or afterwards for sustaining it? The qualifications for such a writer are apparently these two: first, that he should deal chiefly with the elder and elementary affections of man, and under those relations which concern man's grandest capacities; secondly, that he should treat his subject with solemnity, and not with sneer—with earnestness, as one under a prophet's burden of impassioned truth, and not with the levity of a girl hunting a chance-started caprice. I admire Pope in the very highest degree; but I admire him as a pyrotechnic artist for producing brilliant and evanescent effects out of elements that have hardly a moment's life within them. There is a flash and a start-

ling explosion, then there is a dazzling coruscation, all purple and gold; the eye aches under the suddenness of a display that, springing like a burning arrow out of darkness, rushes back into darkness with arrowy speed, and in a moment all is over. Like festal shows, or the hurrying music of such shows—

"It *was*, and it is not."

Untruly, therefore, was it ever fancied of Pope, that he belonged by his classification to the family of the Drydens. Dryden had within him a principle of continuity which was not satisfied without lingering upon his own thoughts, brooding over them, and oftentimes pursuing them through their unlinkings with the *sequaciousness* (pardon a Coleridgian word) that belongs to some process of creative nature, such as the unfolding of a flower. But Pope was all jets and tongues of flame; all showers of scintillation and sparkle. Dryden followed, genially, an impulse of his healthy nature. Pope obeyed, spasmodically, an overmastering febrile paroxysm. Even in these constitutional differences between the two are written and are legible the corresponding necessities of "utter falsehood in Pope, and of loyalty to truth in Dryden." Strange it is to recall this one striking fact, that if once in his life Dryden might reasonably have been suspected of falsehood, it was in the capital matter of religion. He *ratted* from his Protestant faith; and according to the literal origin of that figure he *ratted*; for he abjured it as rats abjure a ship in which their instinct of divination has deciphered a destiny of ruin, and at the very moment when Popery wore the promise of a triumph that might, at any rate, have lasted his time. Dryden was a Papist by apostasy; and perhaps, not to speak uncharitably, upon some bias from self-interest.

Pope, on the other hand, was a Papist by birth, and by a tie of honour; and he resisted all temptations to desert his afflicted faith, which temptations lay in bribes of great magnitude prospectively, and in persecutions for the present that were painfully humiliating. How base a time-server does Dryden appear on the one side!—on the other, how much of a martyr should we be disposed to pronounce Pope! And yet, for all that, such is the overruling force of a nature originally sincere, the apostate Dryden wore upon his brow the grace of sincerity, whilst the pseudo-martyr Pope, in the midst of actual fidelity to his Church, was at his heart a traitor—in the very oath of his allegiance to his spiritual mistress had a lie upon his lips, scoffed at her whilst kneeling in homage to her pretensions, and secretly forswore her doctrines whilst suffering insults in her service.

The differences as to truth and falsehood lay exactly where, by all the external symptoms, they ought *not* to have lain. But the reason for this anomaly was, that to Dryden sincerity had been a perpetual necessity of his intellectual nature, whilst Pope, distracted by his own activities of mind, living in an irreligious generation, and beset by infidel friends, had early lost his anchorage of traditional belief; and yet, upon an honourable scruple of fidelity to the suffering Church of his fathers, he sought often to dissemble the fact of his own scepticism, which yet often he thirsted ostentatiously to parade. Through a motive of truthfulness he became false. And in this particular instance he would, at any rate, have become false, whatever had been the native constitution of his mind. It was a mere impossibility to reconcile any real allegiance to his Church with his known irreverence to religion. But upon far more subjects than this Pope was habitually false

in the quality of his thoughts, always insincere, never by any accident in earnest, and consequently many times caught in ruinous self-contradiction. Is that the sort of writer to furnish an advantageous study for the precious leisure, precious as rubies, of the toil-worn artisan?

The root and the pledge of this falseness in Pope lay in a disease of his mind, which he (like the Roman poet Horace) mistook for a feature of preternatural strength; and this disease was the incapacity of self-determination towards any paramount or abiding *principles*. Horace, in a well-known passage, had congratulated himself upon this disease as upon a trophy of philosophic emancipation:—

> "Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,
> Quo me cunque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes:"

which words Pope thus translates, and applies to himself in his English adaptation of this epistle:—

> "But ask not to what doctors I apply—
> Sworn to no master, of no sect am I.
> As drives the storm, at any door I knock;
> And house with Montaigne now, or now with Locke."

That is, neither one poet nor the other having, as regarded philosophy, any internal principle of gravitation or determining impulse to draw him in one direction rather than another, was left to the random control of momentary taste, accident, or caprice; and this indetermination of pure, unballasted levity both Pope and Horace mistook for a special privilege of philosophic strength. Others, it seems, were chained and coerced by certain fixed aspects of truth, and their efforts were overruled accordingly in one uniform line of direction. But *they*, the two brilliant poets,* fluttered

* "*The two brilliant poets.*" As regards Horace, it is scarcely worth while to direct the reader's attention upon inconsistency of

on butterfly-wings to the right and to the left, obeying no guidance but that of some instant and fugitive sensibility to some momentary phasis of beauty. In this dream of

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this imaginary defiance to philosophic authority with his profession elsewhere of allegiance to Epicurus; for had it even been possible to direct the poet's own attention upon it, the same spirit of frank simplicity which has converted his very cowardice, his unmitigated cowardice (*relictâ non bene parmulâ*), into one of those amiable and winning frailties which, once having come to know it, on no account could we consent to forego—would have reconciled us all by some inimitable picturesqueness of candour to inconsistency the most shocking as to the fulfilment of some great moral obligation; just as from the brute restiveness of a word (Equotuticum), that positively would not come into the harness of hexameter verse, he has extracted a gay laughing *alias* (viz., "*versu quod dicere non est*"); a pleasantry which is nowhere so well paralleled as by Southey's on the name of Admiral Tchitchagoff:—

> "A name which you all must know very well,
> Which nobody can speak, and nobody can spell."

Vain would it be to fasten any blame upon a poet armed with such heaven-born playfulness that upon a verbal defect he raises a triumph of art, and upon a personal defect raises a perpetual memento of smiling and affectionate forgiveness. We "condone" his cowardice, to use language of Doctors' Commons, many times over, before we know whether he would have cared for our condonation; and protest our unanimous belief, that, if he did run away from battle, he ran no faster than a gentleman ought to run. In fact, his character would have wanted its amiable unity had he *not* been a coward, or had he *not* been a rake. Vain were it to level reproaches at *him*, for whom all reproaches become only occasions of further and surplus honour. But, in fact, for any serious purposes of Horace, philosophy was not wanted. Some slight pretence of that kind served to throw a shade of pensiveness over his convivial revels, and thus to rescue them from the taint of plebeian grossness. So far, and no farther, a slight colouring of philosophy was needed for his moral musings. But Pope's case is different. The moral breathings of Horace are natural exhalations rising spontaneously from the heart under the ordinary gleams of chance and change in the human things that lay around him. But Pope is more ambitious. He is not content with *borrowing* from philosophy the grace of a passing

drunken eclecticism, and in the original possibility of such an eclecticism, lay the ground of that enormous falsehood which Pope practised from youth to age. An eclectic philo-

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sanction or countersign, but undertakes to *lend* her a systematic coherency of development, and sometimes even a fundamental basis. In his "Essay on Man," his morals connect themselves with metaphysics. The metaphysics had been gathered together in his chance eclectic rambles amongst books of philosophy, such as Montaigne, Charron, and latterly amongst the fossil rubbish and *débris* of Bayle's Dictionary. Much also had been suggested to his piercing intellect in conversation, especially with Lord Bolingbroke; but not so exclusively by any means with *him* as the calumniators of Pope would have us suppose. Adopt he did from all quarters, but Pope was not the man servilely to beg or to steal. It was indispensable to his own comfort that he should at least understand the meaning of what he took from others, though seldom indeed he understood its wider relations, or pursued its ultimate consequences. Hence came anguish and horror upon Pope in his latter days, such as rarely can have visited any but the death-bed of some memorable criminal. To have rejected the *verba magistri* might seem well, it might look promising, as all *real* freedom is promising, for the interests of truth; but he forgot that, in rejecting the master, he had also rejected the doctrine—the guiding principle—the unity of direction secured for the inquirer by the master's particular system with its deep internal cohesion. Coming upon his own distracted choice of principles from opposite angles and lines of direction, he found that what once and under one aspect had seemed to him a guiding light, and one of the buoys for narrowing the uncertainties of a difficult navigation, absolutely under another aspect, differently approached and differently associated, did the treacherous office of a *spancelled* horse, as in past days upon the Cornish and the south Irish coast it was employed—expressly for showing false signals, and leading right amongst breakers. That *hortus siccus* of pet notions, which had won Pope's fancy in their insulated and separate existence, when brought together as parts and elements of the same system in the elaborate and haughty "Essay on Man," absolutely refused to cohere. No doctoring, no darning, could disguise their essential inter-repulsion. Dismal rents, chasms, hiatuses, gaped and grinned in a theory whose very office and arrogant pretension had been to harmonize the dislocated face of nature, and to do *that* in the way of justification

sopher already, in the very title which he assumes, proclaims his self-complacency in the large liberty of error purchased by the renunciation of all controlling principles. Having severed the towing-line which connected him with any external force of guiding and compulsory truth, he is free to go astray in any one of ten thousand false radiations from the true centre of rest. By his own choice he is wandering in a forest all but pathless,

> "Ubi passim
> Palantes error recto de tramite pellit;"

and a forest not of sixty days' journey, like that old Hercynian forest of Cæsar's time, but a forest which sixty genera-

for God which God had forgotten to do for himself. How if an enemy should come, and fill up these ugly chasms with some poisonous fungus of a nature to spread the dry rot through the main timbers of the vessel? And, in fact, such an enemy *did* come. This enemy spread dismay through Pope's heart. Pope found himself suddenly shown up as an anti-social monster, as an incendiary, as a disorganizer of man's most aspiring hopes. "O Heavens! what is to be done? what *can* be done?" he cried out. "When I wrote that passage, which now seems so wicked, certainly I meant something very good; or, if I didn't, at any rate I meant to mean it." The case was singular; if no friend of the author could offer a decent account of its meaning, to a certainty the author could *not*. Luckily, however, there are two ways of filling up chasms; and Warburton, who had reasons best known to himself for cultivating Pope's favour, besides considerable practice during his youth in a special pleader's office, took the desperate case in hand. He caulked the chasms with philosophic oakum, he "payed" them with dialectic pitch, he sheathed them with copper and brass by means of audacious dogmatism and insolent quibbles, until the enemy seemed to have been silenced, and the vessel righted so far as to float. The result, however, as a permanent result was this—that the demurs which had once been raised (however feebly pressed) against the poem, considered in the light of a system compatible with religion, settled upon it permanently as a sullen cloud of suspicion that a century has not availed to dissipate.

tions have not availed to traverse or familiarize in any one direction.

For Horace, as I have endeavoured to explain in the note, the apology is so much the readier as his intrusions into this province of philosophy are slighter, more careless, and more indirect. But Pope's are wilful, premeditated, with malice aforethought; and his falsehoods wear a more malignant air, because they frequently concern truth speculative, and are therefore presumably more deliberate in their origin, and more influential in the result. It is precisely this part of Pope's errors that would prove most perplexing to the unlearned student. Beyond a doubt the "Essay on Man" would, in virtue of its subject, prove the most attractive to a labouring man of all Pope's writings, as most of all promising a glimpse into a world of permanence and of mysterious grandeur, and having an interest, therefore, transcendent to any that could be derived from the fleeting aspects of manners or social conventionalisms, though illuminated and vivified by satire. *Here* would be the most advantageous and *remunerative* station to take for one who should undertake a formal exposure of Pope's hollow-heartedness; that is, it would most commensurately reward the pains and difficulties of such an investigation. But it would be too long a task for this situation, and it would be too polemic. It would move through a jungle of controversies. For, to quote a remark which I once made myself in print, the "Essay on Man" in one point resembles some doubtful inscriptions in ancient forms of Oriental languages, which, being made up elliptically of mere consonants, can be read into very different senses according to the different sets of vowels which the particular reader may choose to interpolate. According to the choice of the interpreter, it may be read into a loyal or a treasonable meaning. Instead

of this I prefer, as more amusing, as less elaborate, and as briefer, to expose a few of Pope's *personal* falsehoods, and falsehoods as to the notorieties of *fact*. Truth speculative drives its roots oftentimes into depths so dark that the falsifications to which it is liable, though detected, cannot always be exposed to the light of day; the result is known, but not therefore seen. Truth personal, on the other hand, may be easily made to confront its falsifier, not with refutation only, but with the visible *shame* of refutation. Such shame would settle upon *every* page of Pope's satires and moral epistles, oftentimes upon every couplet, if any censor, armed with an adequate knowledge of the facts, were to prosecute the inquest. And the general impression from such an inquest would be, that Pope never delineated a character, nor uttered a sentiment, nor breathed an aspiration, which he would not willingly have recast, have retracted, have abjured or trampled under foot with the curses assigned to heresy, if by such an act he could have added a hue of brilliancy to his colouring or a new depth to his shadows. There is nothing he would not have sacrificed, not the most solemn of his opinions, nor the most pathetic memorial from his personal experiences, in return for a sufficient consideration, which consideration meant always with *him* poetic effect. It is not, as too commonly is believed, that he was reckless of other people's feelings; so far from *that*, he had a morbid *facility* in his kindness; and in cases where he had no reason to suspect any lurking hostility, he showed even a paralytic benignity. But, simply and constitutionally, he was incapable of a sincere thought or a sincere emotion. Nothing that ever he uttered, were it even a prayer to God, but he had a fancy for reading it backwards. And he was evermore false, not as loving or preferring falsehood, but as one who

could not in his heart perceive much real difference between what people affected to call falsehood and what they affected to call truth. Volumes might be filled with illustrations: I content myself with three or four.

I. Pope felt *intellectually* that it was philosophic, and also that it wore an air of nobility, *not* to despise poverty. *Morally*, however, he felt inversely: nature and the accidents of his life had made it his necessity to despise nothing so heartily. If in any one sentiment he ever was absolutely sincere, if there can be cited one insulated case upon which he found it difficult to play the hypocrite, it was in the case of that intense scorn with which he regarded poverty, and all the painful circumstances that form the equipage of poverty. To look at a pale, dejected fellow-creature creeping along the highway, and to have reason for thinking that he has not tasted food since yesterday—what a pang would such a sight, accompanied by such a thought, inflict upon many a million of benign human hearts! But in Pope, left to his spontaneous nature, such a sight and such a thought would have moved only fits of laughter. Not that he would have refused the poor creature a shilling, but still he would have laughed. For hunger, and cold, and poverty, appeared to *him* only in the light of drolleries, and too generally of scoundrelisms. Still he was aware that some caution was requisite in giving public expression to such feelings. Accordingly, when he came forward in gala-dress as a philosopher, he assumed the serene air of one upon whom all such idle distinctions as rich and poor were literally thrown away. But watch him: follow his steps for a few minutes, and the deep realities of his nature will unmask themselves. For example, in the first book of the "Dunciad," he has occasion to mention Dennis,—

"And all the mighty mad in Dennis raged."

Upon this line (the 106th) of the text he hangs a note, in the course of which he quotes a few sentences about Dennis from Theobald. One of these begins thus: "Did we really know how much this poor man suffers by being contradicted," &c.; upon which Pope thinks proper to intercalate the following pathetic parenthesis in italics: "*I wish that reflection on* POVERTY *had been spared.*" How amiable! how pretty! Could Joseph Surface have more dexterously *improved* the occasion: "The man that disparages poverty is a man that—" &c. It is manifest, however, at a glance, that this virtuous indignation is altogether misplaced; for "*poor*" in the quotation from Theobald has no reference whatever to *poverty* as the antithesis to *wealth*. What a pity that a whole phial of such excellent scenical morality should thus have been uncorked and poured out upon the wrong man and the wrong occasion! Really this unhappy blunder extorts from me as many tears of laughter as ever poverty extorted from Pope. Meantime, reader, watch what follows. Wounded so deeply in his feelings by this constrained homage to poverty, Pope finds himself unable to re-settle the equilibrium in his nervous system until he has taken out his revenge by an extra kicking administered to some old mendicant or vagrant lying in a ditch.

At line 106 comes the flourish about Dennis's poverty. Just nine lines a-head, keeping close as a policeman upon the heels of a thief, you come up with Pope in the very act of maltreating Cibber, upon no motive or pretence whatever, small or great, but that he (the said Cibber) was guilty of poverty. Pope had detected him—and this is Pope's own account of the assault—in an overt act of poverty. He deposes, as if it were an ample justification of his own violence,' that Cibber had been caught in the very act—not 'of supping meanly, coarsely, vulgarly, as

upon tripe, for instance, or other offal—but absolutely in the act of not supping at all!

"Swearing and *supperless* the hero sate."

Here one is irresistibly reminded of the old story about the cat who was transformed into a princess; she played the *rôle* with admirable decorum, until one day a mouse ran across the floor of the royal saloon, when immediately the old instinct and the hereditary hatred proved too much for the artificial nature, and her highness vanished over a six-barred gate in a furious mouse-chase. Pope, treading in the steps of this model, fancies himself reconciled to poverty. Poverty, however, suddenly presents herself, not as a high poetic abstraction, but in that one of her many shapes which to Pope had always seemed the most comic as well as the most hateful. Instantly Pope's ancient malice is rekindled; and in line 115 we find him assaulting that very calamity under one name, which under another, at line 106, he had treated with an ostentatious superfluity of indulgence.

II. I have already noticed that some of Pope's most pointed examples which he presents to you as drawn from his own experience of life, are in fact due to jest-books; and some (offered as facts) are pure coinages of his own brain. When he makes his miser at the last gasp so tenacious of the worldly rights then slipping from his grasp as that he refuses to resign a particular manor, Pope forgot that even a jest-book must govern its jokes by some regard to the realities of life, and that amongst these realities is the very nature and operation of a will. A miser is not, therefore, a fool; and he knows that no possible testamentary abdication of an estate disturbs his own absolute command over it so long as he lives, or bars his power of revoking the bequest. The moral instruction is in this

case so poor, that no reader cares much upon what sort of foundation the story itself rests. For such a story a lie may be a decent basis. True; but not so senseless a lie. If the old miser was delirious, there is an end of his responsibilities; and nobody has a right to draw upon *him* for moral lessons or warnings. If he was *not* delirious, the case could not have happened. Modelled in the same spirit are all Pope's pretended portraitures of women; and the more they ought to have been true, as professing to be studies from life, the more atrociously they are false, and false in the transcendent sense of being impossible. Heaps of contradiction, or of revolting extravagance, do not verify themselves to our loathing incredulity because the artist chooses to come forward with his arms a-kimbo, saying angrily, "But I tell you, sir, these are *not* fancy-pieces! These ladies whom I have here lampooned are familiarly known to me; they are my particular friends. I see them every day in the undress of confiding friendship. They betray all their foibles to me in the certainty that I shall take no advantage of their candour; and will you, coming a century later, presume to dispute the fidelity or the value of my contemporary portraits?" Yes, and upon these two grounds: first (as to the fidelity), that the pretended portraits are delineations of impossible people; and, secondly (as to the value), that, if after all they could be sworn to as copies faithful to the originals, not the less are they to be repelled as abnormal, and so far beyond the intelligibilities of nature as practically to mean nothing, neither teaching nor warning. The two Duchesses of Marlborough, for instance, Sarah and Henrietta, mother and daughter, are atrocious caricatures, constructed on the principle of catching at a momentary state or grin, by means of anarchy in the features imputed, and truculent antithesis in the expression. Who

does not feel that these are the fierce pasquinades, and the coarse pasquinades, of some malignant electioneering contest? Is there a line that breathes the simplicity and single-heartedness of truth? Equal disgust settles upon every word that Pope ever wrote against Lady Mary W. Montagu. Having once come to hate her rancorously, and finding his hatred envenomed by the consciousness that Lady Mary had long ceased to care two straws for all the malice of all the wits in Christendom, Pope laboured at his own spite, filing it and burnishing it as a hand-polisher works at the blade of a scimitar. For years he had forgotten to ask after the realities of nature as they existed in Lady Mary, and considered only what had the best chance of stinging her profoundly. He looked out for a "raw" into which he might lay the lash; not seeking it in the real woman, but generally in the nature and sensibilities of abstract woman. Whatever seemed to disfigure the idea of womanhood, *that*, by reiterated touches, he worked into his portraits of Lady Mary; and at length, no doubt, he had altogether obliterated from his own remembrance the true features of her whom he so much detested. On this class of Pope's satiric sketches I do not, however, wish to linger, having heretofore examined some of the more prominent cases with close attention.

The previous section on Pope has been taxed with exaggeration. This charge comes from a London weekly journal (*The Leader*) distinguished by its ability, by its hardihood of speculation, by its comprehensive candour, but, in my eyes, still more advantageously distinguished by its deep sincerity. Such qualities give a special value to the courtesies of that journal; and I in particular, as a literary man, have to thank it for repeated instances of kindness the most indulgent on any occasion which has brought up

the mention of my name. Such qualities of necessity give a corresponding value to its censures. And accordingly, as a point of duty, I directed my attention immediately to *this* censure. Whatever was still unprinted I reviewed; and whatever struck me as open to objection I removed. And if the result after all has been, that I do not altogether concur in the criticism of *The Leader*, the reason is because, as upon re-examination it strikes me, in the worst cases Pope has not left room for exaggeration. I do not see any actual exaggeration, simply because I do not see that any exaggeration is possible. But though I thus found myself unable sincerely to make the sacrifice of my own opinion, another sacrifice of a different kind I *have* made, viz., that of half my paper. I cancelled one half, viz., that half which was occupied with cases in Pope of disingenuousness, and perhaps of moral falsehood or collusion with other people's falsehood, but not of falsehood atrociously literal and conscious; meaning thus to diminish by one half the penance of those who do not like to see Pope assaulted, although forced by uneasiness to watch the assault—a feeling with which I heartily sympathize; and meaning, on the other hand, in justification of myself, to throw the reader's attention more effectively, because more exclusively, upon such cases of frantic and moon-struck falsehood as could allow no room for suspense or mitigation of judgment. Of these I have selected two, one relating to the Duke of Buckingham, and the other to the history and derivation of English literature. Generally, I believe, that to a just appreciation of Pope's falseness, levity, and self-contradiction, it is almost essential that a reader should have studied him with the purpose of becoming his editor. This at one time was my own purpose; and thus it was that I became acquainted with qualities prevailing in Pope which, in the midst of my

great admiration for him, would have made such a purpose difficult of execution. For in the relation between author and editor, any harshness of reproach on the part of the latter, or any expression of alienation and imperfect sympathy, seems unbecoming in one who has spontaneously assumed the office of a *patronus* to a *client*, and are uniformly painful to the reader. On this account it is that the late Mr. Roscoe figures amongst all editors of Pope as by far the most agreeable. He has a just tenderness for the memory and merits of the great writer whom he undertakes to edit; this feeling keeps his annotations clear from the petulance of Joseph Warton and the malice of Bowles; whilst, not having happened to see Pope's errors in the same light as myself, he suffers from no conflict between his natural indulgence to intellectual splendour and his conscientious reverence for truth.

But if the reader is shocked with Pope's false reading of phenomena where not the circumstances so much as the construction of the circumstances may be challenged, what must he think of those cases in which downright facts, and incidents the most notorious, have been outrageously falsified only in obedience to a vulgar craving for effect in the dramatic situations, or by way of pointing a moral for the stimulation of torpid sensibilities? Take, for instance, the death of the second Villiers, Duke of Buckingham—a story which, in Pope's version of it, has travelled into a popularity that may be called national; and yet the whole is one tissue of falsehoods, and of falsehoods that must have been known for such by Pope not less than to most of his contemporary readers. Suppose them *not* known, and the whole must have wanted all natural interest. For this interest lay in the Duke's character, in his superb accomplishments and natural advantages, in his fine person, in his vast wealth,

and in the admirable versatility of his intellectual powers, which made him alternately the idol and the terror of all circles that he approached, which caused Lord Clarendon to tremble with impotent malice in his chancellor's robes, and Dryden to shiver with panic under his laureate crowns. Now, wherever these features of the case were *not* known, the story was no more than any ordinary death arising out of a fox-chase. But those to whom they *were* known must, at the same time, have known the audacious falsehood which disfigures the story in Pope's way of telling it. *Without* the personal interest the incidents were nothing; and *with* that interest at starting, Pope's romance must have defeated itself by its fabulous colouring. Let me recall to the reader the principal lines in this famous description:—

> "In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung,
> The floors of plaster and the walls of dung,
> On once a flock-bed, but repaired with straw,
> With tape-tied curtains never meant to draw,
> The George and Garter dangling from that bed
> Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
> Great Villiers lies! Alas! how changed from him,
> That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim,
> Gallant and gay in Cliveden's proud alcove,
> The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love,
> *There*, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
> And fame, the lord of useless thousands ends."

Without stopping to examine these famous lines as to thought and expression (both of which are scandalously vicious), what I wish the reader to remark is, the one pervading falsehood which connects them. Wherefore this minute and purely fanciful description of the roadside *cabaret*, with its bedroom, and bed? Wherefore this impertinent and also fraudulent circumstantiality? It is, as Pope would tell you, for the sake of impressing with more vivacity

the abject poverty to which the Duke's follies had brought him. The wretched bed, for instance, is meant to be the exponent of the empty purse which could purchase no better. And, for fear that you might miss this construction of the passage, Pope himself tells you, in a prose note, that the Duke "died in a remote inn in Yorkshire, *reduced to the utmost misery.*" Being engaged in the business of dying, it could hardly be expected that the Duke should be particularly happy. But what Pope means you to understand by "misery" is *poverty;* the prose note simply reiterates the words, "victor of *fortune,*" in the text. Now, had the truth been really so, what moral would such a story exemplify beyond the vulgar one of pecuniary improvidence? And yet surely this was not the cause of the Duke's being thrown from his horse. Meantime, Pope well knew that the whole was a ridiculous fable. The Duke had the misfortune to be fatally injured in a fox-chase. In such an extremity, naturally, his servants carry him into the house nearest at hand, which happens to be an alehouse—not "the worst," since there was no other; nor was it possible that, to a man of his distinction, once the lord-lieutenant of that very East Riding, any room would be offered worse than the very best that contained a bed. In these dreadful circumstances, it is not easy to measure the levity which can linger upon the description of such exquisite impertinences as the housewifely defects of the walls, the curtains, the flock-bed, &c. But Pope was at his wit's end for a striking falsehood. He needed for a momentary effect some tale of a great lord, once fabulously rich, who had not left himself the price of a halter or of a pauper's bed. And thus, for the sake of extorting a stare of wonderment from a mob of gaping readers, he did not scruple to give birth and currency to the grossest of legendary fables. The Duke's death

happened a few months before Pope's birth. But the last of the Villiers family that wore a ducal coronet was far too memorable a person to have died under the cloud of obscurity which Pope's representation presumes. He was the most interesting person of the Alcibiades class* that perhaps

* "*The most interesting person of the Alcibiades class.*" But it is thoroughly characteristic of Pope, that the one solitary trait in the Duke's career which interested *him*, was the fact that a man so familiar with voluptuous splendour should have died on a flock-bed patched with straw. How advantageously does Dryden come forward on this occasion! *He*, as Mr. Bayes, had some bitter wrongs to avenge; and he was left at liberty to execute this revenge after his own heart, for he survived the Duke by a dozen years. Yet he took no revenge at all. *He*, with natural goodness and magnanimity, declined to kick the dead lion. And in the memorable lines, all alive and trembling with impassioned insight into the demoniac versatility of the Duke's character, how generously does he forbear every expression of scorn, and cover the man's frailties with a mantle of comprehensive apology, and, in fact, the true apology, by gathering them together, one and all, as the united results of some secret nympholepsy, or some sacred Pythian inspiration:—

> "Blest madman! that could every hour employ
> In something new to wish or to enjoy;
> . . . . . .
> Now all for rhyming, wenching, fiddling, drinking;
> Beside ten thousand freaks that died in thinking!"

Strangely enough, the only Duke of Buckingham that interested Pope was not the Villiers that so profoundly interested Dryden and his own generation, but in every sense a mock Duke of Buckingham, a pantomimic duke, that is known only for having built a palace as fine as gilt gingerbread, and for having built a pauper poem. Some time after the death of the Villiers duke, and the consequent extinction of the title, Sheffield, Lord Mulgrave, obtained a patent creating him, not Duke of Buckingham, but by a pawnbroker's dodge, devised between himself and his attorney, Duke of Buckinghamshire; the ostensible reason for which, as alleged by himself, was, that he apprehended some lurking claim to the old title that might come forward to his own confusion at a future time, and in that case he was ready

ever existed; and Pope's mendacious story found acceptance only amongst an after-generation unacquainted with the realities of the case. There was not so much as a popular rumour to countenance Pope. The story was a pure, gratuitous invention of his own. Even at the time of his

with this demur: "You mistake, I am not *ham*, but ham*shire*." Such was *his* account of the matter. Mine is different: I tell the reason thus. He had known the Villiers of old, he knew well how that lubricated gladiator had defied all the powers of Chancery and the Privy Council, for months after months, once to get a "grip" of him, or a hank ever him. It was the old familiar case of trying to catch a pig (but in this instance a wild boar of the forest) whose tail has been soaped. (See *Lord Clarendon*, not his History but his Life.) What the Birmingham duke therefore really feared was, that the worst room, the tawdry curtains, the flock-bed, &c., were all a pyramid of lies; that the Villiers had *not* been thrown; had probably *not* died at all; but was only "trying it on," in readiness for a great demonstration against himself; and that, in case the title of Buckingham were ever finally given away, the Villiers would be heard clattering on horseback up the grand staircase of the new-built Buckingham House, like the marble statue in "Don Juan," with a double commission against the false duke and the Government as joint-traders in stolen goods. But if Pope were callous to the splendour of the true Buckingham, what was it that drew him to the false one? Pope must have been well aware that, amongst all the poetic triflers of the day, there was not one more ripe for the "Dunciad." Like the jaws of the hungry grave (*Acherontis avari*), the "Dunciad" yawned for him, whilst yet only in dim conception as a remote possibility. He was, besides, the most vain-glorious of men; and, being anxious above all things to connect himself with the blood-royal, he had conceived the presumptuous thought of wooing Queen Anne (then the unmarried Princess Anne). Being rejected, of course, rather than have no connexion at all with royalty he transferred his courtship to a young lady born on the wrong side of the blanket, namely, the daughter of James II. by Miss Sedley. Her he married, and they reigned together in great pomp over Buckingham House. But how should this have attracted Pope? The fact, I fear, is, that Pope admired him, in spite of his verses, as a man rich and pros-

death, the Duke of Buckingham was generally reputed to have sixty thousand per annum, and chiefly from land; an income at that period absolutely without precedent or parallel in Europe. In this there might be some exaggeration, as usually there *is* in such cases. But the "Fairfax Papers" have recently made it manifest that Pope's tale was the wildest of fictions. The Duke of Buckingham had, to some extent, suffered from his loyalty to the Crown, though apparently sheltered from the main fury of the storm by the interest of his Presbyterian father-in-law, Lord Fairfax; and in his own person he had at one time been carelessly profuse. But all this was nothing. The sting of Pope's story requires him to have been a pauper; and yet—O heaven and incredulous earth!—a pauper hunting upon blood-horses, in a star and garter. The plain, historical truth, meanwhile, survives, that this pauper was simply the richest man in Christendom; and that, except Aladdin of the Arabian Nights! there never had been a richer. And thus collapses the whole fable like a soap-bubble.

2. Yet even this specimen of Pope's propensity to falsehood is far from being the worst. Here were facts scandalously distorted. Falsehoods they were; but, if it had pleased God, they might have been truths. Next, however, comes a fiction so maniacally gross, so incoherent, and so rife with internal contradictions, as to involve its own ex-

perous. One morning, in some of his own verses he lodged a compliment to the Duke as a poet and critic: immediately the Duke was down upon him with an answering salute of twenty-one guns, and ever afterwards they were friends. But I repeat that, in Pope's own judgment, nine out of ten who found their way into that great *menagerie* of the "Dunciad" had not by half so well established their right of entrance as the Duke.

posure, literally shrinking from its own intelligible enunciation, burrowing in sentences kept aloof from the text, and calling upon footnotes to cover it. The case will speak for itself. Pope had undertaken to translate the well-known epistle of Horace to Augustus Cæsar; not literally, but upon the principle of adapting it to a modern and English treatment of its topics. Cæsar, upon this system, becomes George the Second—a very strange sort of Cæsar; and Pope is supposed to have been laughing at him, which may be the colour that Pope gave to the travesty amongst his private circle; otherwise there is nothing in the expressions to sustain such a construction. Rome, with a little more propriety, masquerades as England, and France as Greece, or, more strictly, as Athens. Now, by such a transformation, already from the very beginning Pope was preparing for himself a dire necessity of falsehood. And he must have known it. Once launched upon such a course, he became pledged and committed to all the difficulties which it might impose. Desperate necessities would arise, from which nothing but desperate lying and hard swearing could extricate him. The impossibility of carrying through the parallel by means of *genuine* correspondences threw him for his sole resource upon such as were extravagantly spurious; and apparently he had made up his mind to cut his way through the ice, though all the truths that ever were embattled against Baron Munchausen should oppose his advance. Accordingly, about the middle of the epistle, a dilemma occurs from which no escape or deliverance is possible, except by an almighty falsehood. Take the leap Pope must, or else he must turn back when half way through. Horace had occasion to observe that, after Rome had made a conquest of Greece by force of arms, captive

Greece retaliated upon her conqueror by another kind of victory, namely, by that of arts :*—

> "Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
> Intulit agresti Latio."

Now, in the corresponding case (as Pope had arranged it) between England and France, the parallel certainly held good as far as the military conquest. England, it was undeniable, had conquered France in that sense, as completely as ever Rome had conquered Greece or Macedon. Two English kings had seated themselves in succession upon the throne of France ; one virtually, one formally. So far all was tight, and held water. Nothing could disturb *that* part of the case. But next came the retaliatory conquest, by means of arts and letters. How was this to be dealt with ? What shadow or dream of a correspondency could be made out *there* ? What impudence could face *that* ? Already, in Pope's ears, sounded the trumpet of recall ; and Pope mused a little : but "No," he said in effect ; "I will *not* turn back. Why should I ? It is but one astounding falsehood that is wanted to set me free." I will venture to say that Mendez Pinto, the Portuguese liar, that Sir John Mandeville, the traveller, that Baron Munchausen, the most philosophic of bold adventurers into the back settlements of lying, never soared into such an aërial bounce, never cleared such a rasper of a fence, as did Pope on this occasion. He boldly took it upon his honour and credit

* Even this is open to demur. The Roman literature during the main Punic War with Hannibal, though unavoidably reached by some slight influence from the literature of Greece, was rich in native power and raciness. Left to itself, and less disturbed by direct imitation applied to foreign models, the Roman literature would probably have taken a wider compass, and fulfilled a nobler destiny.

that our English armies, in the times of Agincourt and the Regent Bedford, found in France a real, full-grown French literature, packed it up in their baggage-wagons, and brought it home to England. The passage from Horace, part of which has been cited above, stands thus in the translation of Pope :—

> "We conquer'd France, but felt our captive's charms—
> Her arts victorious triumph'd o'er our arms;
> Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
> Wit grew polite, and numbers learn'd to flow."

Ten years, then, before Joan of Arc's execution,* viz., about 1420 (if we are to believe Pope), or even fifteen years, France had a great domestic literature; and this unknown literature has actually furnished a basis to our own. Let us understand clearly what it is that Pope means to assert. For it is no easy matter to do *that* where a man dodges behind text and notes, and shuffles between verse and prose, mystifying the reader, and designing to do so. Under the torture of cross-examination let us force Pope to explain what literature *that* is which, having glorified France, became the venerable mother of a fine English literature in an early stage of the fifteenth century. The reader, perhaps, fancies that possibly Pope may have expressed himself erroneously only from being a little hurried or a little confused. Not at all. I know my man better, perhaps, than the reader does; and I know that he is trying to hoax us. He is not confused himself, but is bent upon confusing *us*; and I am bent upon preventing him. And, therefore, again I ask sternly, What literature is this which

* "*Joan of Arc's execution*:"—viz., not by any English, but virtually by a French tribunal, as *now*, at last, is satisfactorily established by the recent publication, at Paris, of the judicial process itself in its full official records.

very early in the fifteenth century, as early as Agincourt, we English found prospering in France, and which, for the benefit of the English intellect, such men as Ancient Pistol, Nym, Bardolph, Fluellen, Captain Macmorris, Jamy, and other well-known *literati* in the army of Henry V., transplanted (or, "as the wise it call," *conveyed*) to England? Agincourt was fought in 1415; exactly four centuries before Waterloo. That was the beginning of our domination in France; and soon after the middle of that same fifteenth century, viz., about 1452, our domination was at an end. During that interval, therefore, it must have been, then or not at all, that this great intellectual revolution worked by France upon England was begun and completed. Naturally, at this point, the most submissive and sycophantish of Pope's friends would feel moved by the devil of curiosity, if not absolutely by the devil of suspicion, humbly to ask for a name or two. just as a specimen, from this great host of Anglo-Gallic wits. Pope felt (and groaned as he felt) that so reasonable a demand could not be evaded. "This comes of telling lies," must have been his bitter reflection: "one lie makes a necessity for another." However, he reflected that this second lie need not be introduced into the text, where it would have the fatal effect of blowing up the whole bubble: it might be hidden away in a footnote. Not one person in twenty would read it, and he that *did* might easily suppose the note to be some unauthorized impertinence of a foolish commentator.* Secretly, therefore,

* The notes are *now* (*i.e.*, in all modern editions) assigned to their separate authors; though not always in a way to prevent doubts. For instance, Roscoe's notes, except that they are always distinguished by kindness and good sense, are indicated only by the *absence* of any distinguishing signature. But in the early editions great carelessness prevailed as to this point, and, sometimes, intentional dissimulation.

silently, stealthily, so as to draw as little attention as possible, Pope introduced into a note his wicked little brazen solution of his own wicked and brazen conundrum. France, such was the proposition, had worked a miracle upon English ground; as if with some magician's rod, she had called up spawn innumerable of authors, lyric, epic, dramatic, pastoral, each after *his* kind. But by *whom* had France moved in this creation as the chief demiurgus? By whom, Mr. Pope? Name, name, Mr. Pope! "Ay," we must suppose the unhappy man to reply, "that's the very question which I was going to answer, if you wouldn't be so violent." "Well, answer it, then. Take your own time, but answer; for we don't mean to be put off without some kind of answer." "Listen, then," said Pope, "and I'll whisper it into your ear; for it's a sort of secret." Now, think, reader, of a *secret* upon a matter like this, which (if true at all) must be known to the antipodes. However, let us have the secret. "The secret," replied Pope, "is, that some time in the reign of Charles the Second—*when* I won't be positive, but I'm sure it was after the Restoration—three gentlemen wrote an eighteenpenny pamphlet." "Good! And what were the gentlemen's names?" "One was Edmund Waller, the poet; one was Mr. Godolphin; and the other was Lord Dorset." "This trinity of wits, then, you say, Mr. Pope, produced a mountain, price eighteenpence, and this mountain produced a mouse." "Oh, no! it was just the other way. They produced a mouse, price eighteenpence, and this mouse produced a mountain, viz., the total English literature." O day and night, but this is wondrous strange! The total English literature—not the tottle only, but the tottle of the whole, like an oak and the masts of some great amiral, that once slept in an acorn—absolutely lying hid in an eighteenpenny pamphlet! And

what, now, might this pamphlet be about? Was it about the curing of bacon, or the sublimer art of sowing moonshine broadcast? It was, says Pope, if you *must* know everything, a translation from the French. And judiciously chosen; for it was the *worst* (and surely everybody must think it proper to keep back the *best*, until the English had earned a right to such luxuries by showing a proper sense of their value); the *worst* it was, and by very much the worst, of all Corneille's dramas; and its name was "Pompey." Pompey, was it? And so, then, from Pompey's loins we, the whole armies of English *littérateurs*, grubs and eagles, are lineally descended. So says Pope. So he *must* say, in obedience to his own line of argument. And, this being the case, one would be glad to have a look at Pompey. It is hard upon us *literati*, that are the children of Pompey, not to have a look at the author of our existence. But our chance of such a look is small indeed. For Pompey, you are to understand, reader, never advanced so far as to a second edition. That was a poor return on the part of England for Pompey's services. And my too sceptical mind at one time inclined to doubt even Pompey's *first* edition; which was wrong, and could have occurred only to a lover of paradoxes. For Warton (not Tom, but Joe) had actually seen Pompey, and records his opinion of him, which happened to be this: that Pompey was "pitiful enough." These are Joe's own words. Still, I do not see that one witness establishes a fact of this magnitude. A shade of doubt, therefore, continues to linger over Pompey's very existence; and the upshot is, that Pompey (not the great, but confessedly) the doubtful, eighteenpenny Pompey, but, in any case, Pompey, "the Pitiful," is the great overriding and tutelary power, under whose inspiration and inaugurating impulse our English literature has blossomed and ripened,

root, stem, and branch, through the life-struggles of five centuries, into its present colossal proportions.

Here pause, reader, and look back upon the separate reticulations, so as if possible to connect them in this huge network of hideous extravagance; where, as elsewhere it happens, that one villany hides another, and that the mere depth of the umbrage spread by fraudulent mystifications is the very cause which conceals the extent of those mystifications. Contemplated in a languid mood, or without original interest in the subject, that enormity of falsehood fails to strike which, under circumstances personally interesting, would seem absolutely incredible. The outrage upon the intellect actually obscures and withdraws from notice the outrage upon the facts. And, inversely, the affronts to historical accuracy obscure the affronts to good sense. Look steadily for a moment at the three points in the array of impeachments :—

1. In the Red-rose invasion of France, Pope assumes, as a matter of notoriety, that the English invading force went from a land of semi-barbarism to a land of literature and refinement: the simple fact being so conspicuously the other way, that whilst France had then no literature at all, consequently *could* have nothing to give (there being no book extensively diffused in the France of that period, except the *De Imitatione Christi**), England, on the other hand, had so bright a jewel to offer that to this hour the whole of Christendom has not matched it or approached

* Which was probably not of French origin. Thomas-à-Kempis, Gerson, and others, have had the credit of it; but the point is still doubtful. When I say that it was *extensively* diffused, naturally I mean so far as was possible before the invention of printing. One generation after Agincourt this invention was beginning to move, after which—that is, in two generations—the multiplication of the *De*

it. Even at present, in the case so often supposed, that a man were *marooned*, that is, confined (as regarded his residence) to one desert island, and marooned also as to books, confined I mean (as regarded his reading) to one sole book, his choice (if he read English) would probably oscillate between Shakspere and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Now the Canterbury Tales had been finished about thirty-five years before Agincourt; so exquisitely false even in this point is Pope's account. Against the *nothing* of beggarly France was even then to be set a work which in its class *has* not been rivalled, and probably *will* not be rivalled, on our planet.

2. In this comparison of the France and England then existing, historically Pope betrays an ignorance which is humiliating. He speaks of France as if that name of course covered the same states and provinces that it now covers. But take away from the France of this day the parts then possessed by Burgundy; take away Alsace, and Lorraine, and Franche Compté; take away the alien territories adjacent to Spain and Navarre; take away Avignon, &c.; take away the extensive duchy of Britanny, &c.; and what remains of that which constituted the France of Pope's day? But even that which *did* remain had no cohesion or unity as regarded any expanded sentiment of nationality, or the possibilities of a common literature. The moral anachronisms of Pope in this case are absolutely frightful, and the physical anachronisms of Pope also; for the simple want of roads, by intercepting all peaceful and

Imitations as regards copies, and even as regards separate editions and separate translations, ran beyond all power of registration. It is one amongst the wonders of the world; and the reason I have formerly explained. Froissart belongs to the courts of England and of Burgundy much more than to that of France.

pleasurable intercourse, must have intercepted all growth of nationality, unless when a rare community of selfish interest happened to arise, as when the whole was threatened with conquest or with famine through foreign aggression upon a part.

3. That particular section of the French literature through which Pope pretends to think (for think he does *not*) that France absolutely created our own, was the drama. Eighteenpenny Pompey belongs to this section. Now, most unhappily, these two broad facts are emblazoned beyond all power of impudence to darken them. The first is, that our English drama was closing, or actually *had* closed, just about the time when the French was opening. Shakspere notoriously died in 1616, when Corneille* was yet a child of ten, and the last of Shakspere's great contemporary dramatists died, according to my remembrance, in 1636; and, in 1635, one year earlier, was first performed the first successful French tragedy (the "Medea" of Corneille). About seven or eight years after *that*, the Puritans officially suppressed the English drama by suppressing the theatres. At the opening of the Parliamentary war, the elder (that is the immortal) English drama had finished its career. But Racine, the chief pillar of the French, did not begin until Cromwell was dead and gone, and Charles II. was restored. So here we have the Æsopian fable of the lamb troubling the waters for the wolf, who stood nearer *confessedly* to the fountain of the stream; or, in the Greek proverb, *ano potamon*. The other fact is, that as no section whatever of the French literature has ever availed to influence, or in the

* Hardi, it is scarcely necessary to mention; as he never became a *power* even in France, and *out* of France was quite unknown. He coincided in point of time, I believe, most nearly with Francis Beaumont.

slightest degree to modify our own, it happens that the dramatic section in particular, which Pope insists on as the galvanizing force operating upon our fathers, has been in the most signal repulsion to our own. All the other sections have been simply inert and neutral; but the drama has ever been in murderous antagonism to every principle and agency by which our own lives and moves.* And to make this outrage upon truth and sense even more outrageous, Pope had not the excuse of those effeminate critics, sometimes found amongst ourselves, who recognise no special divinity in our own drama; *that* would have been one great crime the more, but it would have been one inconsistency the less. For Pope had been amongst the earliest editors of Shakspere: he had written a memorable preface to this edition. The edition it is true was shocking; and if the preface even was disfigured by concessions to a feeble system of dramatic criticism, rhetorically it was brilliant with the expression of a genuine enthusiasm as to Shakspere, and a true sympathy with his colossal power.

4. Yet even this may not be the worst. Even below this deep perhaps there opens a lower deep. I submit that, when a man is asked for a specimen of the Agincourt French literature, he cannot safely produce a specimen from a literature 250 years younger without some risk of facing a writ *de lunatico inquirendo*. Pompey the Pitiful

* Italian, Spanish, and finally German poetry have in succession exercised some slight influence, more or less, over our English poetry. But I have formerly endeavoured to show that it is something worse than a mere historical blunder, that, in fact, it involves a gross misconception and a confusion in the understanding, to suppose that there ever has been what has been called a *French school* in our literature, unless it is supposed that the unimpassioned understanding, or the understanding speaking in a minor key of passion, is a French invention.

(or if the reader is vexed at hearing him so called, let us call him, with Lord Biron in "Love's Labour's Lost," "more than great, great Pompey, Pompey the Huge") was not published, even in France, until about two centuries and a quarter had elapsed from Agincourt. But, as respects England, eighteenpenny Pompey was not yet revealed; the fulness of time for his *avatar* amongst us did not arrive until something like 260 years had winged their flight from Agincourt. And yet Pope's doctrine had been that, in the conquest of France, we English first met with the Prometheus that introduced us to the knowledge of fire and intellectual arts. Is not this ghastly? Elsewhere, indeed, Pope skulks away from his own doctrine, and talks of "*correctness*" as the particular grace for which we were indebted to France. But this will not do. In his own "Art of Criticism," about verse 715, he describes "us brave Britons" as incorrigibly rebellious in that particular. We *have* no correctness, it seems, nor ever had; and therefore, except upon Sir Richard Blackmore's principle of stealing a suit of clothes "from a naked Pict," it is hard to see how we need to thank France for that which, as to us, has no existence. Then, again, Pope acquiesced at other times in an opinion of his early friends, that not Pompey, but himself, was the predestined patriarch of "correctness." Walsh, who was a sublime old blockhead, suggested to Pope that "correctness" was the only tight-rope upon which a fresh literary performer in England could henceforth dance with any advantage of novelty; all other tight-ropes and slack-ropes of every description having been pre-occupied by elder funambulists. Both Walsh and Pope forgot ever once to ask themselves what it was that they meant by "correctness;" an idea that, in its application to France, Akenside afterwards sternly ridiculed. Neither of

the two *literati* stopped to consider whether it was correctness in thought, or metrical correctness, or correctness in syntax and idiom ; as to all of which, by comparison with other poets, Pope is conspicuously deficient. But no matter what they meant, or if they meant nothing at all. Unmeaning, or in any case inconsistent, as this talk about "correctness" may be, we cannot allow Pope *so* to escape from his own hyperbolical absurdities. It was not by a little pruning or weeding that France, according to his original proposition, had bettered our native literature ; it was by genial incubation, by acts of vital creation. She, upon our crab-tree cudgel of Agincourt, had engrafted her own peaches and apricots ; our sterile thorn France had inoculated with roses. English literature was the Eve that, in the shape of a rib, had been abstracted from the side of the slumbering Pompey—of unconscious Pompey the Huge. And all at the small charge of eighteenpence ! O heavens, to think of *that !* By any possibility that the cost, the total "damage" of our English literature, should have been eighteenpence ! that a shilling should be actually coming to us out of half-a-crown !

"Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem."

GLANCE AT THE WORKS OF MACKINTOSH.*

THIS collection comprehends, with one exception (viz., the *History of England*, which is published separately), all that is of permanent value in the writings of Sir James Mackintosh. The editor is the writer's son; and he, confident in powers for higher things, has not very carefully executed the minor duties of his undertaking. He has contributed valuable notes; but he has overlooked some important errors of the press, and he has made separate errors of his own. At page 387, vol. ii., Charles VII. is described as king of *Sweden*, meaning clearly king of Denmark. At page 557, of the same volume, Sir James, having referred to "a writer now alive in England," as one who had "published doctrines not dissimilar to those which Madame de Staël ascribes to Schelling," the editor suggests that probably the person in his eye was Mr. William Taylor of Norwich. This is the most unaccountable of blunders. Mr. Taylor of Norwich was among the earliest English students of German, and so far his name connects itself naturally with a notice of the *De l'Allemagne.* But, on the other hand, he never trespassed into

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* The Miscellaneous Works of the Right Hon. Sir James Mackintosh. Edited by Robert James Mackintosh, Esq. In Three Volumes 8vo. London: Longman & Co.

the fields of metaphysics. He did not present any "allurements" in a "singular character," nor in "an unintelligible style;" neither was he the author of any "paradoxes." The editor is probably thinking of Taylor the Platonist, who was far more distinguished for absurdity, and is now equally illustrious for obscurity. But that either of these Taylors, or both, or even *nine* of them, acting with the unanimity of one man, ever could have founded "a sect," is so entirely preposterous, that the accomplished editor must pardon my stopping for half a minute to laugh. The writer, whom Sir James indicated, was probably "Walking Stewart;" a most interesting man whom personally I knew; eloquent in conversation; contemplative, if *that* is possible, in excess; crazy beyond all reach of hellebore; three Anticyræ would not have cured him; yet sublime and divinely benignant in his visionariness; the man who, as a pedestrian traveller, had seen more of the earth's surface, and communicated more extensively with the children of the earth, than any man before or since; the writer also who published more books (all intelligible by fits and starts) than any Englishman, except perhaps Richard Baxter, who is said to have published three hundred and sixty-five, *plus* one, the extra one being probably meant for leap-year. Walking Stewart answers entirely to the description of Sir James's unknown philosopher; his character was most "singular;" his style tending always to the "unintelligible;" his privacy, in the midst of eternal publication, most absolute; his dispostion to martyrdom, had anybody attempted it, ready and cheerful; and as the "founder of a sect," considering his intense cloudiness, I am not at all sure but he might have answered as well as the Grecian Heracleitus, as Spinosa the Jew, or even as Schelling the Teutonic Professor. *His* plantations were quite as thriving

as theirs; but the three foreigners fell upon happier times, or at least (as regards the last of them) upon a soil more kindly, and a climate more hopeful for metaphysical growths. Not only has the editor done that which he ought *not* to have done, but too often he has left undone that which he *ought* to have done. The political tracts of the third volume require abundant explanations to the readers of this generation; and yet the notes are rare as well as slight.

There is no need, at this time of day, to take the altitude, intellectually, of Sir James Mackintosh. His position in public life was that of Burke; he stood as a mediator between the world of philosophy and the world of moving politics. The interest in the two men was the same in kind, but differently balanced. As a statesman, Burke had prodigiously the advantage; not only through the unrivalled elasticity of his intellect, which in that respect was an intellect absolutely *sui generis*, but because his philosophy was of a nature to express and incarnate itself in political speculation. On the other hand, Sir James was far better qualified, by nature as well as by training, for the culture of pure abstract metaphysics. It is sometimes made a matter of regret that Burke should have missed the professor's chair which he sought. This is injudicious: as an academic lecturer on philosophy, or a speculator in ontological novelties, Burke would have failed. Not so Mackintosh. As to *him*, the regret would be reasonable: by detaching him from the cares of public business, a chair of philosophy would have widened the sphere of those higher speculations which, under *his* management, could not have been less than permanently profitable to the world.

To review so extensive a collection is clearly impossible within any short compass. I content myself with a flying

glance at those papers which are likely to prove the most interesting.

MACKINTOSH ON STRUENSEE.

The case of Count Struensee is to this hour wrapped in some degree of darkness: but, even under those circumstances of darkness, it is full of instruction. The doubts respect Struensee himself, and the unhappy young queen, Matilda; were *they* criminal in the way alleged by their profligate enemies? So far there is a cloud of mystery resting on the case: but, as to those enemies, as to the baseness of their motives, and the lawlessness of their acts, there is no doubt at all, and no shadow of mystery. This being so, it being absolutely certain that the accusers were the vilest of intriguers, and unworthy of belief for a moment, when at any point they passed the boundary line of judicial proof, certified to Christendom by public oaths of neutral parties,—it follows, that the accused are every where entitled to the benefit of any doubt, any jealousy, any umbrage, suspicion, or possibility, against the charge which *has* arisen, *shall* arise, or can arise, in the brain of the most hair-splitting special pleader. They that ruined better people than themselves by the wickedest of special pleading, cannot have too much of it: let *them* perish, as regards history and reputation, by the arts which they practised.

King Christian the Seventh of Denmark, came over to London early in the reign of George the Third:

> "It was in the golden prime
> Of good Haroun Alraschid."

He came by contract to fall in love with our Princess

Matilda. But he had the misfortune to be "imbecile," which is a word of vague meaning; in fact, he was partially an idiot, and at times a refractory madman. It has been remarked, in connexion with Mr. Galt's excellent novels, that at one time (of course not the present time), too large a proportion of the Scottish lairds were secretly, and in ways best known to their households, daft; and in such a degree, that, if not born gentlemen, they would certainly, by course of law, have been *cognosced.** Perhaps the same tendency, and developed in part by the same defects of training, at that time affected the royal houses of Europe. Christian VII. if, instead of being a king, he had been a Scottish labourer, would certainly have been "cognosced." Amongst other eccentricities, that recoiled eventually upon others, he insisted on his friend's thumping him, kicking him, knocking him down, and scratching him severely: and, if his friend declined to do so, then he accused him of high treason. Really you had difficult cards to play with this daft laird of Copenhagen. If you positively refused to thump him, then you were a rebel: an absolute monarch had insisted on your doing a thing, and you had mutinously disobeyed. If you thumped him, and soundly (which was the course taken by his friend Brandt), then you were a traitor; you had assaulted the Lord's anointed, and were liable to question from the *lex majestatis.* To London did this madman come; perhaps on the principle laid down by the grave-digger in Hamlet—that in

* "*Cognosced:*" A term well known to Scottish law, and therefore to Roman law. It means *judicially reviewed and reported*, no matter in reference to what. But, in common conversation, it has come elliptically to mean—*duly returned as an idiot.* *Cognosco*, it must be remembered, is the appropriate word, in classical Latin, for judicial review and investigation.

England all men are mad; so that madness is not much remarked. The king saw London; and London saw *him*. But a black day it was for some people, when he first set his face towards St. James's. The poor young princess Matilda, sister to George III. and then only seventeen years old, became his unhappy wife; and Struensee, a young physician, whom he had picked up at Altona, about the same time received the fatal distinction of becoming his favourite and his minister. The frail personal tenure of such a situation, dependent on the caprices of a man, imbecile equally as regarded intellect and as regarded energy of will, suggested to a cabal of court rivals the obvious means for overthrowing and supplanting the favourite. To possess themselves suddenly of the king's person, was to possess themselves of the state authority. Five minutes sufficed to use this authority for the arrest of Struensee,—after which, as a matter of course, followed his close confinement, with circumstances of cruelty, now banished everywhere, even from the treatment of felons; to that succeeded his pretended trial, his pretended penitence, his pretended confession, and, finally, his execution.

Sir James Mackintosh notices the *external* grounds of suspicion applying to the publications against Struensee, and particularly the doubtful position in respect to the conspirators of Dr. Munter, the spiritual assistant of the prisoner. This man was employed by the government: was he not used as a decoy, and a calumniating traitor? That point is still dark. He certainly published what he had no right to publish. Sir James is disposed, on the other hand, to find *internal* marks of sincerity in the doctor's account of his conversations with Struensee. But were not these in their very nature confidential? And Sir James himself remarks, that nobody knows what became latterly of Munter

himself; so that the vouchers for his veracity, which might have been found in subsequent respectability of life, are entirely wanting. General Falkenskiold's Memoirs make us acquainted with the artifices used to obtain from the unhappy young queen a confession of adulterous intercourse with Struensee. And, if these artifices had been even unknown to us, it must strike everybody, that such a confession being so gratuitously mischievous to the queen, is not likely to have been made by her, in any case where she was free from coercion, or free from gross delusion. Equally on the hypothesis of her guilt or her innocence, the poor lady could have had no rational motive for inculpating herself, except such as would imply stratagems and frauds in the conspirators. The case seems to tell its own story. It was thought necessary to include Matilda in the ruin of Struensee, because else there was no certainty of *his* ruin; and upon *that* depended not only the prosperity of the intrigue, but the safety of the intriguers. The destruction recoiled upon themselves, if the young queen regained the king's ear. But this could be prevented certainly by nothing short of her removal for ever from the court. And *that* could be accomplished only by a successful charge of adultery. Else, besides other consequences, the cabal feared the summary interposition of England. But of adultery, as they had no proof, or vestige of a proof, it became necessary to invent one, by obtaining a confession from the queen herself. And this was obtained by practising on her credulity, and her womanly feelings of compassion for the unfortunate. She was told by the knaves about her, that an acknowledgment of guilt would save the life of the perishing minister.

There is something in this atrocious falsehood as to Struensee, a part of the story which is not denied by any

party, reminding one of the famous anecdote about Colonel Kirke, in connexion with Monmouth's rebellion: a fable no doubt in *his* case, but realized by the Danish conspirators. They won their poor victim to what she abhorred, by a promise that could have offered no temptation except to a generous nature; and, having thus gained their villanous object, they did not even counterfeit an effort to fulfil the promise. A confession obtained under circumstances like these, would weigh little with the just and the considerate.* But where is the proof that the queen *did* make such a confession? No body of state-commissioners ever received anything of the kind from her own hands: nothing remains to attest it but the two first letters of her name, having written which, she is said to have fainted away: but who wrote the words *above* her fraction of a signature, without which the signature is unmeaning, and *when* they were written, whether before or after that fractional signature, nothing survives to show. Besides, if Munter's account of penitential confessions in prison (many of which argue rather the abject depression from a bread-and-water diet, and from savage ill-treatment, than any sincere or natural compunction) are to be received against Struensee, much more ought we to receive the dying declarations of the young queen;

* Sir James Mackintosh, though manifestly inclined to adopt this account of the pretended confession, a little weakens the case by saying,—"*If* General Falkenskiold was rightly informed," as though the invalidation of the confession were conditional upon the accuracy of the General. But in fact, if *his* account were withdrawn, the conspirators are in a still worse position: for the unfinished signature, *confessedly* completed surreptitiously by some alien hand, points strongly towards a physical compulsion exercised upon the queen,—such as had given way, and naturally *would* give way, under a violent struggle, after one or two letters had been extorted by forcibly guiding her hand.

for these were open to no suspicions of fraud. Three years after her pretended confession, she declared to her spiritual attendant, M. Roques, that, although conscious of imprudences, she never had been criminal. This was her solemn declaration, in the midst of voluntary penitential expressions, and at a moment when she knew herself to be dying. Strange indeed, considering her youth, and her unhappy position amongst enemies, knaves, and a lunatic husband, if she had *not* fallen into some imprudences.

Meantime, Sir James Mackintosh is almost certainly wrong in his view of the course adopted by the English government. He imagines that, from mere excess of indisposition to all warlike movements at that time, this government shrank from effectual interference. But evidently the case was one for diplomatic management. And in that way it was effectually conducted to the best possible solution, by the British ambassador, Sir Robert Murray, who frightened the guilty intriguers out of their wits. Once satisfied that nothing would be attempted against the life of the queen, England had no motive for farther interference, nor any grounds to go upon. She could not have said, "I declare war against you, because you have called a daughter of England by the foul name of adulteress." The case was too delicate, and too doubtful. Even now, after some light has been obtained, the grounds for a legal judgment are insufficient on either side: *then*, they were much more so. The English *government* must also have been entirely controlled, in such a case, by the private wishes of the royal family; and it was a natural feeling for *them*, when no prospect existed of a fair judicial inquiry, amongst those, who in fighting against the queen, would be fighting for their own lives, to retire from a feud that could only terminate in fixing the attention of Europe upon the miserable

charges and scandals; charges that arose in self-interest, and scandals that were propagated by malice.

The moral of the story seems to lie in its exposure of the ruins, and the absolute chaos worked by a pure despotism. All hangs by the thread of the sovereign's personal character. Here is a stranger to the land suddenly raised from the dust into a station of absolute control over the destinies of the people. *His* rise, so sudden and unmerited, calls forth rival adventurers: and an ancient kingdom becomes a prize for a handful of desperate fortune-hunters. Is there no great interest in the country that might rally itself, and show front against this insufferable insult? There is none. Had the case arisen in the old despotisms of France or of Spain, it could have been redressed: for each of them possessed ancient political institutions, that would perhaps have revived themselves under such a provocation. But in Denmark there were no similar resources. The body of the people, having no political functions, through any mode of representation, were utterly without interest in public affairs: they had no *will* to move. The aristocracy had no *power*, unless in concert with the king. And the king was a lunatic. All centred, therefore, in half-a-dozen ruffians and their creatures; and the decencies of public justice, the interests of the innocent, with the honours of an ancient throne, went to wreck in their private brawls.

MACKINTOSH'S DISSERTATION ON THE PROGRESS OF ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY.

This is the most valuable of all the twenty-eight tracts here collected. At the outset, however (p. 10), it shocks

the sense of just logic not a little to find Sir James laying down the distinction between the Moral and the Physical Sciences, as though "the purpose of the Physical were to answer the question—*What is?* the purpose of the Moral to answer the question—*What ought to be?*" Yet at p. 238, Sir James himself makes it the praise* of a modern writer, that he professes to have treated the moral affections "rather physiologically than ethically;" as parts of our mental constitution, not as involving the fulfilment or violation of duties. Now, this is exactly the same thing as saying that he has translated the inquiry from the *ought* to the *is:* which translation Sir James views as an important change; and not, as may be fancied, important for the general field of philosophy, but expressly for "the territory of Ethics." In reality, the merest *practical* guide to morals cannot evade continual glimpses into regions of pure theory. And, confining ourselves to the great *polemic* systems of morality, amongst which it is that Sir James's business lies, we must all be aware that their differences are not with respect to what should be done and left undone, but with respect to the *grounds* of doing and forbearing, or with respect to the method of deducing these grounds. It was a mistake of the same nature which led Coleridge to speak scornfully of a man's fancying any room, at this time of day, for innovation in Ethics, whether in the way of improvement or addition. To be novel, to be original, was upon this view unavoidably to be false: and no road, it seems, is open to truth in morals, except through the monotony of ancient commonplaces. But all this I vehemently deny. In days of old, the Academic, the Peripatetic, the

* "*The praise:*" and even the special or separate praise of that writer, which is far, indeed, from being true.

Stoic, the Epicurean, sought for originality—not by patronizing separate modes of action, but by deriving from separate principles the same modes, or by unfolding the various relations of objects that were still the same.* Not one of them dissented from the praise of patriotic zeal, of justice, of temperance, of veracity. You hear of nobody but a scoundrel Spartan (always too illiterate to write on Ethics) that ever thought of recommending immodesty to young women, or the picking of pockets to boys, or the flagellation of innocent children as an agreeable gymnastic exercise to grown-up gentlemen. Allowing for these denaturalized wretches on the banks of the Eurotas, all Greeks had *practically* the same final views in Ethics. What they differed in was the way of arriving at these final views; from what fountains they were to be derived; and, in passing down from these fountains, through what particular obstructions

* In speaking of Ethics, and of the room which it allows for vast variety of views, I confine myself naturally in the text to the part which concerns theory and speculation; that being the part with which Sir James is occupied, and that being precisely the part which Coleridge overlooked in the passage referred to. But, even as regards the practical part, I cannot forbear calling the reader's attention to the gross blindness of that common sentiment which bids us look for nothing new in Ethics. What an instance of "seeing but not perceiving, hearing but not understanding!" So far from being stationary, Ethics, even as a *practical* system, is *always* moving and advancing; and without aid, or needing aid, from colleges or professors. A great part of our political life and struggling is but one vast laboratory for sifting and ascertaining the rights, the interests, the duties, of the unnumbered and increasing parties to our complex form of social life. Questions of rights (and consequently of duties) that were never heard of one and two centuries ago, rights of captives, rights of public criminals, rights of pauperism, rights of daily labour, rights of private property amongst belligerents, rights of children born in camps, rights of creditors, rights of debtors, rights of colonists as against the mother country, rights of colonists as against the

or collisions of principle they had to fight their way. It is the will, the *ought*, the practical, which is concerned in the final maxims of Ethics; but it is the intellect, the *is*, the theoretic, which is concerned chiefly in the early stages of its deduction.

One consequence, and an unfortunate consequence, from what I have here noticed as an oversight in Sir James, is, that he has not examined the various opinions among the ancient Greek schools as to the *summum bonum;* nor apparently has adverted to the importance of such an examination. These conflicting opinions formed for *them* the rudders, or regulative principles, of their moral theories. We in Christendom have two concurrent sets of such theories: one of worldly ethics, in which "vice" and "virtue" are the prevailing terms; another of Christian ethics, in which the terms are "sin" and "holiness." And

aborigines of their new country, rights of the aborigines as against the colonists,—these questions, with countless others of the same class, are rising by germs and fractions in every newspaper that one takes up. Civil society is a vast irregular encampment, that even now, whilst we speak, is but beginning to take up its ground scientifically, to distribute its own parts, and to understand its own economy. In this view, one may quote with pleasure a sentence from David Hartley, which is justly praised by Sir James Mackintosh,—"The rule of life, drawn from the practice and opinions of mankind, corrects and improves itself perpetually." And as it does this by visiting, searching, trying, purifying, every section and angle of the social system, it happens in the end that this very system, which had been the great *nidus* of evil and wrong, becomes itself a machinery for educating the moral sense. With this eternal expansion in new duties arising, or old ones ascertained, combine, reader, the unlimited invitation held out by growing knowledge to the recasting as to parts, or the resettlement as to foundations, of ethical theories, and you begin to look with amazement upon the precipitate judgment of Coleridge. If there is any part of knowledge that could be really condemned to stagnation, probably it would soon die altogether.

singular it is, that these separate systems flow oftentimes quite apart, each deaf to the other, and nobody taking any notice of their collisions, or seeking for any harmony between them. The first class reposes chiefly on good sense, and the prudential experience of life; the second, upon the revealed will of God. But, upon any graver or more solemn interest of morals coming forward, recourse is usually had to some principles or other, more or less truly stated, professing to derive themselves from revelation. So that, in modern Europe, the Scriptures are a primary source of morals to some theorists, and a supplementary source to all. But the ancients, it must be remembered, had no such resource in revelation. Real or pretended revelation never existed for *them*; consequently, the revealed will of God, which at once settles amongst *us* what is the true *summum bonum* for man and his race, could not be appealed to, either as furnishing a foundation for ethical systems, or as furnishing their integration. In default of such a resource, never, in fact, having heard or conceived of such a resource, which way could the Greeks turn themselves? Naturally, and indeed necessarily, they set themselves to investigate the *summum bonum*, so far as it was fitted for a human nature. What was the supreme object after which man should strive? Was it pleasure, was it power, wisdom, happiness, or freedom from passion? Because, according to the decision, arose a corresponding economy of morals. The supreme good, whatever *that* were found to be, formed the *nucleus* around which the system of moralities crystallized and arranged themselves. Sir James regrets, with reason, the wrecked condition in which all the elder systems of Greek ethics are now lying. Excepting the Platonic remains generally, and the two works of Aristotle on this subject, we have no authentic documents to steer by. But

by collecting all the fragments, and looking back to the presiding view of the *summum bonum*, we might rebuild the outlines of the old ethics ; at least, as a fossil megatherium is rebuilt,—not so as to display its living power, but enough of its structure to furnish a basis for comparison.

It is singular that Sir James, with all his scholastic subtlety, should not have remarked the confusion which Paley, and others of his faction, make between utility as a *test* or *criterion* of morality, and utility as a *ground* of morality. Taking it even in the limited sense of a test (that is, as the means by which we *know* an act to be moral, but not therefore as any ground or reason which *makes* the act to be moral), the doctrine is a mere barren theorem, perfectly inert and without value for practical application ; since the consequences of all important actions expand themselves through a series of alternate undulations, expressing successively good and evil ; and of this series no summation is possible to a finite intellect. In its earliest and instant effects, a given act shall be useful : in its secondary effects, which we may distinguish as the undulation B, it shall become perhaps mischievous (mischievous, I mean, now that it has reached a new order of subjects) : in C, the tertiary undulation, it shall revive into beneficial agencies ; and in remoter cycles travel again into evil. Take for instance the French Revolution, or any single act by which a disinterested man should have deliberately hastened on that awful event ; in what blindness must he have stood at the time, say about 1789, as to the ultimate results of his own daring step ! First came a smiling dawn and the loveliest promise of good for man. Next came a dreadful overcasting, in which nothing could be seen distinctly ; storms and darkness, under cover of which innocent blood was shed like water, fields were

fought, frenzies of hatred gathered amongst nations, such as cried to heaven for help and for retribution. That woe is past; the second undulation is gone by: and now, when the third is below our eyes, we are becoming sensible that all that havoc and fury, though sad to witness or to remember, were not thrown away; the chaos has settled into order, and a new morning with a new prospect has arisen for man. Yet even here the series of undulations is not complete. It is perhaps barely beginning: other undulations, moving through other revolutions, and perhaps fiercer revolutions, will soon begin to travel forward. And if a man should fancy that he would wait for the final result, before he made up his mind as to the question of moral verdict to be pronounced upon the original movement, he would make a resolution like that of a child who proposes to chase the rainbow.

As a *criterion*, therefore, the principle of utility could not be of any *practical* value for appraising an act or system of acts; since this utility is never known, even by approximation, until long after the election of the act must have been made. But a worse fault in Paley is, that he has mistaken his own position, and lost in his perplexity the real object which he was then in search of. This was exactly what the schoolmen would have called the *form*, *i.e.*, formal principle or essence of virtue; the *ratio essendi*; what, in fact, it is that constitutes the common ground, or internal principle of agreement between two acts (one, suppose, an act of justice, one an act of temperance), so as to bring them equally under the common denomination of virtue.*

* Paley's error was, therefore, when scholastically expressed, a confusion between the *ratio essendi* and the *ratio cognoscendi*. About a hundred years ago, Daries, and some other followers of

Perhaps the perfection of acuteness appears in Sir James Mackintosh's refutation of Paley upon the law of honour. Rarely has a false idea been more suddenly caused to founder and to show out. At one sling it is dispersed into smoke. And the reader is the more gratified, because in fact Paley was doing a bit of sycophancy to public cant when he said the thing which Mackintosh exposes. What he said was this: The principle called *the law of honour* is worthless. An ordinary debt, for instance, to a tradesman may be neglected with no wound to a man's honour: not so a gaming debt; this becomes an obligation of honour. And very properly; because the latter sort of debt cannot be recovered compulsorily; but the other may. This power in the creditor, though it does not relieve you from the duty of paying him, most properly

Leibnitz and Wolff, made an effort to recall this important distinction; that is, to force the attention upon the importance of keeping apart the *index* or *criterion* of any object from its *essential or differential principle*. Some readers may fancy it more easy to keep these ideas apart, than systematically to confound them. But very many cases, and this of Paley's in particular, show that there is a natural tendency to such a confusion. And upon looking more rigorously, I perceive that Sir James Mackintosh has *not* overlooked it; he has in fact expressed it repeatedly; but always in terms that would hardly have conveyed the full meaning to my mind, if I had not been expressly seeking for such a meaning. At p. 14 (vol. i.), he thus distinguishes:—"These momentous inquiries relate to at least two perfectly distinct subjects: I. The nature of the distinction between Right and Wrong in human conduct; and, II. The nature of those feelings with which Right and Wrong are contemplated by human beings. The discrimination has seldom been made by moral philosophers; the difference between the two problems has never been uniformly observed by any of them." At p. 15, he taxes both Paley and Bentham with having confounded them; and subsequently, at p. 193, he taxes the latter still more pointedly with this capital confusion.

relieves you from the stress upon your honour. Honour creates a sanctity in that only which is confided to the keeping and sanction of honour. It is good for so much as it undertakes. But, if this were even otherwise, how is Paley entitled to presume, in any law, a countenance to crimes of which that law simply takes no cognizance? "His chapter," says Sir James, "on what he calls the Law of Honour, is unjust even in its own small sphere, because it supposes Honour to *allow* what it *does not forbid*; though the truth be that the vices enumerated by him are only not forbidden because they are not within its jurisdiction." Honour tells a man to repay a friend who lent him money at a critical moment of distress, and who holds no voucher for that money: but honour never told a man *not* to pay his shoemaker. That sort of debt indeed honour does not enforce, though far from discountenancing its payment, simply because such a case does not fall within its proper cognizance. But as well might the Court of Chancery be reproached for not trying the crime of murder. If we adopted the infirm logic of Paley, we should be bound in such a case to infer that our Supreme Court of Equity looked indulgently upon the crime of murder.

There are two most weighty remarks at p. 106, connected by Sir James, with this subject of Paley. One is, that even if the law of honour ceased as a separate mode of obligation (not contradicting general moral laws, but only unequally enforcing them), still there would remain a natural and transcendent law of sexual morality, as much distinct from the higher ethics as the worldly principle of honour, viz., that morality which makes the characteristic virtue of a man to lie in courage, of a woman in chastity. Great good is done, and much of social welfare is upheld, by such a morality; and also, as by the rule of honour,

some wrong, because much practical partiality, and oftentimes much disproportion in our judgments. Yet here is a mode of morality, imperfect as honour is imperfect, but not therefore false, and which still works for good, and which all the Paleys in this world will fortunately never be able to shake.

The other remark concerns the *tendency* of Paley's philosophy, which, having little grandeur or enthusiasm to support it, was morbidly disposed to compromise with evil, and to "go for" as much good as seemed conveniently to be got. Most justly does Mackintosh tax it with looking in the same direction as the worst ethics of the Roman-Catholics, that is, the ethics of Escobar and the most intensely worldly amongst the Jesuits. Upon that he argues that no philosophy can be so unfitted for the training of the moral sense, or for the culture of the noble and the enthusiastic, as it exists in early manhood. Oxford, but more especially Cambridge, as carried by old connexion too naturally to an exaggerated estimate of Paley, would do well to think of this. Paley's talents, within lower spheres of speculation, were prodigious. But he wanted everything that should have fitted him for what is subtlest in philosophy, or what is grandest in ethics. Continue to honour the man as the most philosophic amongst the essentially worldly-minded: but do not ratify and countersign his *hybrid* morality by making it a chief text of your ethics, and an examination-book for the young aristocracy of England.

MACKINTOSH ON MACHIAVEL.

"There is a short but fine and very important exordium*

* "*Exordium*:" an exordium which virtually (and in parts verbally) repeats a similar passage at pp. 44, 45 of vol. i.

to the paper on Machiavel, exposing the relations of literature to science, to ethics, and to speculative philosophy. That function of literature, by which it reacts upon all these great interests, so as to diffuse them, to popularize them, to protect them, and to root them, is apt enough to escape the notice of most men, who regard literature as a mere embellishment of life, not as one of its deep-sunk props. And yet, as Sir James truly remarks, in times when the whole philosophic speculation of a country gathers itself into cloistral retreats, and when as yet there is no general literature to diffuse its results and to naturalize its capital problems amongst the people, nothing is more liable to sudden blights than such insulated advances in culture; which, on the other hand, become ineradicable when once they have knit themselves on to the general mind of the people by the intertexture of literature. Spinning this kind of *nidus* for itself, the larva of the future chrysalis becomes safe; whilst otherwise it is in constant peril.

What suggests this train of thought is the fact that Machiavel, amongst prose-writers on speculative and abstract themes, was one of the first who "stooped to conquer," by laying aside the borrowed dignity of a learned language: being an Italian, he wrote Italian; he adapted himself to the popular mind amongst his countrymen; he spoke to them in their mother tongue. By such an effort a man sacrifices a little momentary rank in the estimate of critics, to regain it a hundredfold in an influence wide and lasting over the general heart. The choice of Machiavel was wise; and yet perhaps not made in the spirit of wisdom, but of rancorous passions. He could not reach his enemies by his republican patriotism, or his fierce miso-tramontanism *without* Italian; he could not reach his friends by counsels that should guide their exterminating swords, unless through a

familiar dialect. The same malicious and destroying wisdom, in the same service of a vindictive heart, burns in the most famous of his works, *The Prince.* This work it is, and the true interpretation of its reckless insensibility to the wickedness of the machinery by which it works, that probably constituted the reason to Sir James Mackintosh for at all turning his attention upon Machiavel.

It has always been a riddle whether *The Prince* of Machiavel were meant for a Titan satire upon the profligacy of political agents, or very seriously for a Titan theory of evil arts as the only weapons commensurate to the unscrupulous wickedness of men armed with power. It is Sir James Mackintosh's wish to side with the former view of the question :—"*The Prince,*" says he, "is an account of the means by which tyrannical power is to be acquired and preserved : it is a theory of that class of phenomena. It is essential to its purpose, therefore, that it should contain an exposition of tyrannical arts. But it is also plain that the calm statement of tyrannical arts is the bitterest of all satires against them." Yes, for him who has already preconceived such a view of tyrannical arts ; but no satire at all for him who has reconciled himself to such arts, as the indispensable means of placing men upon a level with their enemies, and cities upon equal terms with their rivals. When Gulliver talked with coolness and smiling amateurship of every art used in Christian warfare for hacking, hewing, slashing, maiming, or burning the framework of human bodies, he was viewed by his royal auditor, after hearing him coolly to the end, as the most horrid little monster on the terraqueous globe. But Gulliver had so little suspected any liability in his own opinions to such a construction, that he had talked with the self-satisfied air of a benevolent philosopher teaching the *old* idea how to shoot.

"A philosophical treatise on poisons would," says Mackintosh, "determine the quantity of each poisonous substance capable of producing death, the circumstances favourable or adverse to its operation, and every other information essential to the purpose of the poisoner, though not intended for his use." Something like this has been pleaded on behalf of Machiavel by others. But in fact it will not bear a critical scrutiny. For all depends on the mode of presenting the poisonous arts. In a little chemico-medical manual lying before me at this moment, the Parisian author, speaking of the modes employed to colour wines, says, "On peut jaunir ces liquides" (white wines) "à l'aide du gaz acide sulfureux : cette fraude est dangereuse, si l'acide se trouve en assez grande quantité." Now here there is something not strictly correct; for the writer teaches a secret which he knows to be profitable on one hand and dangerous on the other, with a slight caution that he might easily have made a full one. The secret is likely to be tried, it is likely to cause danger; whilst the simple means for evading the danger, viz., by stating the proper proportions, he is too indolent to report. Yet still, though blameable, this author is far above being suspected of any wish to teach murderous arts. And what is the proof of this? Why, that he never introduces any substance for the mere purpose of showing its uses as a poison; but, when *other* uses have obliged him to notice it, he takes occasion to caution the reader as to those which are dangerous. If a man were answerable for all the indirect or inverse modes of reading his book, then every writer on medical jurisprudence would be liable to indictment; for such works may be always turned to account as reversely systems of poisoning; the artifices for detecting guilt may always be applied by a Locusta [Sueton. *in Claudio*] or a

Brinvilliers as so many directions for aiding its operations; just as the Lord's Prayer, read backwards, was of old times the shortest means for evoking the fiend. Now Machiavel's arts of tyranny are not collected from this sort of reading backwards: they compose a good, honest, and straightforward assertion of wholesale wickedness as absolutely essential to prosperity and comfort of mind in this shocking world. Many have fancied, that if challenged as an elaborate jester in masquerade, Machiavel would have burst into explosions of laughter. Far from it: he would have looked as angry and disconcerted as Gulliver, and would have said, probably, "Oh, if you come to virtue, and all that sort of thing, really I pretend to no opinions on the subject: I am addressing myself to men of sense, and simply taking it for granted, that, *as* such, in a world of universal kicking and being kicked, they will wish to kick back in every direction."

But the defect of Sir James Mackintosh's paper, is the neglect of positive extracts from *The Prince*, given in their true connexion. Such a treatment would soon have dispersed any doubts about the final drift of the work. For, suppose that in a work on poisons (to adopt Mackintosh's own illustration), you met with a little section like this:— "With respect to the proper mode of despatching young toothless infants, I always set my face against the use of poison. I do so on moral principle, and also as a man of refinement. It is evident that poison in such a case is quite needless: you may operate more speedily by a little lavender water: this will be agreeable to both parties, yourself and the child: pour a few spoonfuls into a slop-basin; hold the little human kitten with its face downwards in this, and it will hardly have time to mew before the trick will be done. Now observe the difference of cir-

cumstances with respect to an adult. How pleasing it is to the benign heart, that nature should have provided so vast a gamut in the art of murder! To the philosophic mind it suggests the idea, that perhaps no two people ought to be murdered in the same manner. Suppose, for instance, the subject marked for immediate despatch to be your uncle; a huge, broad-shouldered monster, evidently quite unfit to live any longer. I should say, now, that a dose of corrosive sublimate would be the correct thing for *him*. Phlebotomy would never do with such a bullock as that. He would turn a mill with his blood, and the place of operating would become a mere shambles. If, again, you attempted to repeat upon *him* the experiment that had succeeded with the infant, surprising and holding him down in the water when washing his face, the refractory ruffian would assuredly break the basin in his struggles: his face would be lacerated; and when his howling had brought the police to his assistance, the streaming blood would give an air of plausibility to his odious calumny, that you had been attempting to cut his throat; whereas *he* knows, as well as *you* know, that not a drop of blood would have been spilt, and very little water, had he forborne making so horrid an uproar."

After such a passage, I suppose few people would be satisfied with Sir James's construction of the book:—"It is an account of the means by which the art of assassination is to be acquired and preserved: it is a theory of that class of phenomena. It is essential to its purpose, therefore, that it should contain an exposition of murder in all its varieties." In reality, the state of Italian society in those days, as Sir James himself suggests, is the best key to the possibility of such a work as *The Prince*, but, at the same time, the best guarantee of its absolute sincerity. We

need only to read the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, who was a contemporary of Machiavel, to see with what reckless levity a man, naturally generous and brave, thought of avenging his slightest quarrel by a pistol-shot from some cowardly ambuscade. Not military princes only, but popes, cardinals, bishops, appear to have employed murderers, and to have sheltered murderers as a necessary part of their domestic garrisons, often to be used defensively or in menace; but, under critical circumstances, to be used aggressively for sudden advantages. It was no mistake, therefore, in Frederick of Prussia, to reply calmly and elaborately to *The Prince*, as not meant for a jest, but as a serious philosophic treatise offered to the world (if on such a subject one may say so), in perfect *good faith.* It may perhaps also be no mistake, at all events it proves the diffusive impression as to the cool wickedness of the book, that, in past times, many people seriously believed the name of Old *Nick* [one of the vulgar expressions for the devil], to have been an off-set from the name of *Niccolo* Machiavelli.*

MACKINTOSH ON THE "ICON BASILIKÉ."

People, in general, imagine that the question relating to the *Icon Basiliké* is obsolete and hastening to decay. But, more properly, it should be described as in the condition of those tapestries which fade into dimness when laid aside

* But this is altogether a mistake: English people resident in Southern France (and amongst them I think the late Lady Blessington) have been often made aware of a common nursery artifice for alarming refractory children in the appeal to *Niccolo;* far too profoundly traditional to have been borrowed from any book, much less from a book of doubtful interpretation, and in an alien language.

for a long time into dark repositories; but, upon being brought back to sunlight, revive gradually into something of their early life and colouring.* There are four separate reasons why the authorship of this book will always remain an interesting problem for the historical student :—

1*st*, Because it involves something of a mystery. In this respect it resembles the question as to the Gowrie Conspiracy, as to the Iron Mask, &c. &c.; and, unless some new documents should appear, which is not quite impossible, but is continually growing nearer to an impossibility, it will *remain* a mystery; but a mystery which might be made much more engaging by a better mode of presenting the evidence on either side, and of pointing the difficulties that beset either conclusion.

2*dly*, Because it is an instructive example of conflicting evidence, which evidence having long been sifted by various cross-examiners, sharp as razors from ability and from reciprocal animosity, has now become interesting for itself: the question it was, which interested at the first; but at length the mere testimonies, illustrated by hostile critics, have come to have a separate interest of their own apart from the point at issue.

3*dly*, The book has a close connexion with the character of Charles I., which is a character meriting a profound attention, where its native features are brought under the light of the very difficult circumstances besetting its natural development.

* "*Life and colouring:*"—Such a change happened, three or four years ago, to what are called The Raphael Tapestries. After having been laid up in darkness for about ten years, they were brought out and exhibited at Manchester; after which the crimsons deepened remarkably under constant exposure to light, the blues clarified themselves, and the harmonies of the colouring began to revive.

4thly, The book is one of that small number which (like the famous pamphlet of the Abbé Sieyes on the *Tiers état*) produced an impression in its day worthy to be called *national*. According to my present recollection, I must, myself, have seen the forty-ninth edition; at present [May 1846] it wants but thirty-two months of full two hundred years* since the publication of the book: such an extent of distribution in an age of readers so limited, such a duration of the interest connected with a question so personal, is the strongest testimony extant of the awe pursuing so bold an act as the judicial execution of a king.

Sir James Mackintosh takes up the case as against Dr. Wordsworth. And, being a lawyer, he fences with the witnesses on the other side, in a style of ease and adroitness that wins the reader's applause. Yet, after all, he is not the more satisfactory for being brilliant. He studied the case neither more nor less than he would have done a brief: he took it up on occasion of a sudden summons *ab extra*: and it is certain that no justice will ever be done to *all* the bearings of the evidence, unless the evidence is examined *con amore*. It must be a labour of love, spontaneous, and even impassioned; and not of mere compliance with the suggestion of a journal, or the excitement of a new book, that will ever support the task of threshing out and winnowing *all* the materials available for this discussion.

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* The king suffered on the 30th of January 1649. And I have somewhere read an anecdote, that Royston, the publisher, caused several copies, the first that were sufficiently dry, to be distributed amongst the crowd that surrounded the scaffold. This was a bold act. For Royston and all his equipage of compositors were in great peril already, by their labours at the press. Imprisonment for political offences was fatal to three out of four in those days: but the penalties were sometimes worse than imprisonment for offences so critically perilous as that of Royston.

Were I proprietor of this journal,* and entitled to room *à discretion*, perhaps I might be indiscreet enough to take forty pages for my own separate use. But, being merely an inside passenger, and booked for only one place, I must confine myself to my own allotment. This puts an end to all idea of reviewing the whole controversy; but it may be well to point out one or two oversights in Sir James Mackintosh.

The reader is aware of the question at issue, viz., whether the *Icon*, which is supposed to have done so much service to the cause of royalty, by keeping alive the memory of Charles I., in the attitude of one forgiving injuries, or expostulating with enemies in a tone of apparent candour, were really written by the king himself, or written *for* him, under the mask of his character, by Dr. Gauden. Sir James, in this case, is counsel for Dr. Gauden. Now, it happened that about six months after the Restoration, this doctor was made Bishop of Exeter. The worthy man was not very long, viz., exactly forty-eight days, in discovering that Exeter was "a horror" † of a bishopric. It *was* so; he was quite correct there: "horror" is his own word; and a horror it was until a late act for exalting the weak and pulling down the mighty. Sir James seems to have thought this phrase of "a horror," *un peu fort* for so young a prelate. But it is to be considered that Dr. Gauden came immediately from the rural deanery of Bocking, where the pastures are good. And Sir James ought to have known by one memorable case in his own time, and charged

* The journal in which this originally appeared.

† "*A horror:*"—It is true that Dr. Gauden received a sum of twenty thousand pounds within the first year; but *that* was for renewal of leases that had lapsed during the Commonwealth suppression of the sees; and nothing so great was likely to occur again.

upon the injustice of his own party, that it is very possible for a rural parson leaving a simple rectory to view even a bishopric as an insupportable affront; and, in fact, as an atrocious hoax or swindle, if the rectory happened to be Stanhope, worth in good mining years six thousand *per annum*, and the bishopric to be Exeter, worth, until lately, not so much as two. But the use which Sir James makes of this fact, coming so soon after the king's return, is, that assuredly the doctor must have had some conspicuous merit, when so immediately promoted, and amongst so select a few. That merit, he means to argue, could have been nothing else or less than the seasonable authorship of the *Icon.*

It is certain, however, that the service which obtained Exeter, was *not* this. Worcester, to which Gauden afterwards obtained a translation, and the fond hope of Winchester, which he never lived to reach, may have been sought for on the argument of the *Icon.* But Exeter was given on another consideration. This is certain; and, if known to Sir James, would perhaps have arrested his final judgment.

2. Sir James quotes, without noticing their entire inaccuracy, the well-known words of Lord Clarendon, that when the secret (as to the *Icon*) should cease to be such, "nobody would be gladd of it but Mr. Milton." I notice this only as indicating the carelessness with which people read, and the imperfect knowledge of the facts even amongst persons like Lord Clarendon, having easy access to the details and contemporary with the case. Why should the disclosure have so special an interest for Milton? The *Icon Basilikè*, or royal image, having been set up for national worship, Milton, viewing the case as no better than idolatry, applied himself to pull down the idol; and, in allusion to the title of the book, as well as to the ancient sect of Iconoclasts, he called his own exposure of the *Icon* by the

name of *Iconoclastes*, or the Image-breaker. But Milton had no interest in Lord Clarendon's secret. What he had meant by *breaking the image* was, not the showing that the king had not written the book, but that whoever had written it (king or anybody else), had falsely represented the politics and public events of the last seven years, and had falsely coloured the king's opinions, feelings, and designs, as expounded by his acts. Not the title to the authorship was what Milton denied : of *that* he was comparatively careless : but the king's title to so meek and candid a character as was there portrayed. It is true that laughingly, and *in transitu*, Milton notices the unlikelihood of a king's finding leisure for such a task, and he notices also the internal marks of some chaplain's hand in the style. That same practice in composition, which suggested to Sir James Mackintosh his objections to the style, as too dressed and precise for a prince writing with a gentleman's negligence, suggested also to Milton his suspicion of a clerical participation in the work. He thought probably, which may, after all, turn out to be true, that the work was a joint product of two or more persons. But all *that* was indifferent to his argument. His purpose was to destroy the authority by exposing the falsehood of the book. And his dilemma is framed to meet either hypothesis ; that of the king's authorship, or that of an anonymous courtier's. Written *by* the king, the book falsifies facts in a way which must often have contradicted his own official knowledge, and must therefore impeach his veracity : written *for* the king, the work is still liable to the same charge of *material* falsehood, though probably not of conscious falsehood ; so far the writer's position may seem improved ; one who was not in the Cabinet would often utter untruths, without knowing them to be such ; yet

again this is balanced by the deliberate assumption of a false character for the purpose of public deception.

3. Amongst the passages which most affect the king's character, on the former hypothesis (viz, that of his own authorship), is the 12th section of the *Icon*, relating to his private negotiations with the Irish Roman Catholics. The case stands thus: Charles had been charged with having excited (or permitted his Popish queen to excite) the Irish rebellion and massacre of 1641. To this charge, being factious and false, it was easy for him to reply with the bold front of an innocent man. There was next a second charge, of having negotiated with the rebels subsequently to their insurrection. To this also there was a reply: not so triumphant, because, as a fact, it could not be blankly denied; but under the state difficulties of the king, it was capable of defence. Thirdly, however, there was a charge quite separate and much darker, which, if substantiated, would have ruined the royal cause with many of its stanchest adherents. This concerned the secret negotiation with the Popish nuncio through Lord Glamorgan. It may be ninety years since Dr. Birch, amongst his many useful contributions to English history, brought to life this curious correspondence: and since that day there has been no room for doubt as to the truth of the charge. Lord Glamorgan was a personal friend of the king, and a friend so devoted, that he submitted without a murmur to be represented publicly as a poor imbecile creature,* this being the sole

* This "poor imbecile creature" was the original suggester of the steam-engine. He is known in his earlier life as Lord Herbert, son of Lord Worcester, who at that time was an earl, but afterwards raised to a marquisate, and subsequently the son was made Duke of Beaufort. And from him the present House of Beaufort (the old royal Plantagenet Somersets), Lord Raglan, &c., are the direct lineal

retreat open to the king's own character. Now, the *Icon* does not distinguish this last charge, as to which there was *no* answer, from the two others where there *was*. In a person situated like Gauden, and superficially acquainted with political facts, this confusion might be perfectly natural. Not so with the king; and it would deeply injure his memory, if we could suppose him to have benefited artfully by a defence upon one charge which the reader (as he knew) would apply to another. Yet would it not equally injure him to suppose that he had accepted from another such an equivocating defence? No: for it must be recollected that the king, though he had read, could not have had the opportunity (which he anticipated) of revising the proof sheets; consequently we know not what he might finally have struck out. But, were it otherwise, Sir James Mackintosh argues that the dishonesty would, under all the circumstances, have been trivial, when confined to the act of tolerating an irrelevant defence, in comparison of that dishonesty which could deliberately compose a false one. So far I fully agree with Sir James: his apology for the *defence* of the act, supposing that defence to be Gauden's, is sufficient. But his apology for the act itself is, I fear, untenable. He contends,—that "it certainly was not more unlawful for him" [the king] "to seek the aid of the Irish Catholics, than it was for his opponents to call in the succour of the Scotch Presbyterians." How so? The

descendants. Apart from the negotiations with the nuncio the king's personal bargain with Lord Herbert (whom he made Earl of Glamorgan, as a means of accrediting him for this particular Irish service) was tainted with marks of secret leanings to Popery. Lord Glamorgan's family were Papists; and into this family, the house of Somerset having Plantagenet blood in their veins, the king was pledged to give a daughter in marriage, with a portion of three hundred thousand pounds.

cases are most different. The English and the Scottish Parliaments were on terms of the most brotherly agreement as to all capital points of policy, whether civil or religious. In both Senates all were Protestants ; and the preponderant body, even in the English Senate, up to 1646, were Presbyterians, and, one may say, Scottish Presbyterians ; for they had taken the Covenant. Consequently no injury, present or in reversion, to any great European interest, could be charged upon the consciences of the two Parliaments. Whereas the Kilkenny treaty, on Charles's part, went to the direct formal establishment of Popery as the Irish Church, to the restoration of the lands claimed as church lands, to a large confiscation, and to the utter extermination of the Protestant interest in Ireland. The treaty did all this, by its tendency ; and if it were to be prevented from doing it, *that* could only be through prolonged war, in which the king would have found himself ranged in battle against the Protestant faith. The king not only testified his carelessness of the Protestant interest, but he also raised a new and a rancorous cause of civil war.

The truth is, that Mackintosh, from the long habit of defending the Roman Catholic pretensions, as applying to our own times, was tempted to overlook the difference which affected those pretensions in 1645-6. Mark the critical point of time. A great anti-Protestant league of kingdoms had existed for a century, to which Spain, Austria, Bavaria, many Italian states, and, intermittingly, even France, were parties. The great agony of this struggle between Popery and the Reformation, came to its crisis, finally and for ever, in the Thirty Years' War, which, beginning in 1618 (just one hundred years after Luther's first movement), terminated in 1648, by the Peace of Westphalia. That treaty it was, balancing and readjusting all Christendom, until the French

Revolution again unsettled it, that first proclaimed to the Popish interest the hopelessness of further efforts for exterminating the Protestant interest. But this consummation of the strife had not been reached by four or five years at the time when Charles entered upon his jesuitical dealings with the Popish council in Ireland; dealings equally at war with the welfare of struggling Europe, with the fundamental laws of the three kingdoms which the king ruled, and with the coronation oaths which he had sworn. I, that feel deep pity for the afflicted prince, whose position blinded him, of necessity, to the truth in many things, am the last person to speak harshly of his conduct. But undoubtedly he committed a great error for his reputation, that would have proved even a fatal error for his interests, had it succeeded at the moment, and that might have upset the interests of universal Protestantism, coming at that most critical moment. This case I notice, as having a large application; for it is too generally true of politicians, arguing the Roman Catholic claims in these modern days, when the sting of Popery, as a political power, is extracted, that they forget the very different position of Protestantism, when it had to face a vast hostile confederation, always *in procinctu* for exterminating war, in case a favourable opening should arise.

Taking leave of the *Icon Basilikè*, I would express my opinion that the question is not yet exhausted: the pleadings must be re-opened. But in the meantime no single arguments have been adduced against the king's claim of equal strength with these two of Sir James's; one drawn from external, the other from internal evidence:

First, that on the Gauden hypothesis, Lord Clarendon's silence as to the *Icon* in his history, though not strictly correct, is the venial error of a partisan; but that, on the other, or anti-Gauden hypothesis, his silence is fatal to his

own character, as a man decently honest ; and yet without an intelligible motive.

Secondly, that the *impersonal* character of the *Icon* is strongly in favour of its being a forgery. All the rhetorical forgeries of the latter Greek literature, such as the Letters of Phalaris, of Themistocles, &c., are detected by that mark. These forgeries, applying themselves to ages distant from the writer, are often, indeed, self-exposed by their ignorant anachronisms. That was a flaw which could not exist in a forgery applied to contemporary events. But else in the want of facts, of circumstantialities, and of personalities, such as were sure to grow out of love or hatred, there is exactly the same air of vagueness, and of timid dramatic personation, in the *Icon*, as in the old Greek knaveries.

MACKINTOSH'S MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.

Perhaps it would have been an advantageous change for this republication of Sir James Mackintosh's works, if the entire third volume had been flung overboard, so as to lighten the vessel. This volume consists of political papers, that are at any rate imperfect, from the want of many documents that should accompany them, and are otherwise imperfect, laudably imperfect, from their author's station as a political partisan. It was his duty to be partial. These papers are merely contributions to a vast *thesaurus*, never to be exhausted, of similar papers : dislocated from their general connexion, they are useless ; whilst, by compelling a higher price of admission, they obstruct the public access to other articles in the collection, which have an independent value, and sometimes a very high value, upon the very

highest subjects. The ethical dissertation is crowded with just views, as regards what is old, and with suggestions brilliant and powerful, as regards all the openings for novelty. Sir James Mackintosh has here done a public service to education and the interests of the age, by setting his face against the selfish schemes of morality, too much favoured by the tendencies of England. He has thrown light upon the mystery of conscience. He has offered a subtle method of harmonizing philosophic liberty with philosophic necessity. He has done justice, when all men were determinately unjust; to the leading schoolmen, to Aquinas, to Ockham, to Biel, to Scotus, and in more modern times to Soto and Suarez. To his own contemporaries, he is not just only, but generous, as in the spirit of one who wishes to make amends for the past injustice of others. He is full of information and suggestion upon every topic which he treats. Few men have so much combined the power of judging wisely from a stationary position, with the power of changing that station, under changing circumstances in the age or in the subject. He moves slowly, or with velocity, as he moves amongst breakers, or amongst open seas. And upon every theme which he treats, in proportion as it rises in importance, the reader is sure of finding displayed the accomplishments of a scholar, the philosophic resources of a very original thinker, the elegance of a rhetorician, and the large sagacity of a statesman controlled by the most sceptical caution of a lawyer.

ANECDOTAGE.

MISS HAWKINS'S ANECDOTES.*

This orange we mean to squeeze for the public use. Where an author is poor, this is wrong; but Miss Hawkins being upon her own acknowledgment rich (p. 125), keeping "a carriage, to the *propreté* of which she is not indifferent" (p. 253), and being able to give away manors worth more than £1000 per annum (p. 140), it is most clear that her interests ought to bend to those of the public; the public being really in very low circumstances, and quite unable to buy books of luxury and anecdotage.

Who is the author, and what is the book? The author has descended to us from the last century, and has heard of little that has happened since the American war. She is the daughter of Sir John Hawkins, known to the world, 1st, as the historian of music; 2d, as the acquaintance and biographer of Dr. Johnson; 3d, as the object of some vulgar gossip and calumnies made current by Mr. Boswell. Her era being determined, the reader can be at no loss to deduce the rest: her chronology known, all is known. She

* *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches, and Memoirs.* Collected by Letitia Matilda Hawkins

belongs to the *literati* of those early ages who saw Dr. Johnson in the body, and conversed in the flesh with Goldsmith, Garrick, Bennet Langton, Wilkes and liberty, Sir Joshua, Hawkesworth, &c. &c. All of these good people she "*found*" (to use her own lively expression) at her father's house: that is, upon her earliest introduction to her father's drawing-room at Twickenham, most of them were already in possession. Amongst the "&c. &c." as we have classed them, were some who really ought not to have been thus slurred over, such as Bishop Percy, Tyrwhitt, Dean Tucker, and Hurd: but others absolutely pose us. For instance, does the reader know anything of one *Israel Mauduit*? We profess to know nothing; no, nor at all the more for his having been the author of *Considerations on the German War* (p. 7): in fact, there have been so many German wars since Mr. Mauduit's epoch, and the public have since then been called on to "consider" so many "considerations," that Miss Hawkins must pardon us for declaring, that the illustrious Mauduit (though we remember his name in Lord Orford's Memoires) is now defunct, and that his works have followed him. Not less defunct than Mauduit is the not less illustrious Brettell. Brettell! What Brettell? *What* Brettell! Why, "Wonderful old Colonel Brettell of the Middlesex Militia (p. 10), who, on my requesting him, at eighty-five years of age, to be careful in getting over a five-barred gate, replied, Take care of what? Time was, when I could have jumped over it." "Time was!" he says, *was*; but how will *that* satisfy posterity? What proof has the nineteenth century that he did it, or could have done it? So much for Brettell and Mauduit. But last comes one who "hight Costard:" and here we are posed indeed. Can this be Shakspere's Costard—everybody's Costard—the Costard of

Love's Labour's Lost? But how is that possible? says a grave and learned friend at our elbow. I will affirm it to be impossible. How can any man celebrated by Shakspere have visited at Twickenham with Dr. Johnson? *That* indeed, we answer, deserves consideration: yet, if he can, where would Costard be more naturally found than at Sir John Hawkins's house, who had himself annotated on Shakspere, and lived in company with so many other annotators, as Percy, Tyrwhitt, Steevens, &c.? Yet again, at p. 10, and at p. 24, he is called "the learned Costard." Now this *is* an objection; for Shakspere's Costard, the old Original Costard, is far from learned. But what of *that?* He had plenty of time to mend his manners, and fit himself for the company of Dr. Johnson: and at p. 80, where Miss Hawkins again affirms that his name was "always preceded by the epithet *learned*," she candidly admits that "he was a feeble, ailing, emaciated man, who had all the appearance of having sacrificed his health to his studies," as well he might, if he had studied from Shakspere's time to Dr. Johnson's. With all his learning, however, Costard could make nothing of a case which occurred in Sir John Hawkins's grounds; and we confess that we can make no more of it than Costard. "In a paddock," says Miss Hawkins, "we had an oblong piece of water supplied by a sluice. Keeping poultry, this was very convenient for ducks: on a sudden, a prodigious consternation was perceived among the ducks: they were with great difficulty persuaded to take to the water; and, when there, shuddered, grew wet, and were drowned. They were supposed diseased; others were bought at other places; but in vain! none of *our* ducks could swim. I remember the circumstance calling out much thought and conjecture. The learned George Costard, Dr. Morton, and the medical ad-

visers* of the neighbourhood, were consulted : every one had a different supposition ; and I well recollect my own dissatisfaction with all I heard. It was told of course to Mr. and Mrs. Garrick. Mrs. Garrick would not give credit to it : Garrick himself was not incredulous ; and after a discussion, he turned to my father with his jocose impetuosity, and said, 'There's my wife, who will not believe the story of these ducks, and yet she believes in the eleven thousand virgins.'" Most probably the ducks were descended from that "which Samuel Johnson trod on," which, "if it had lived and had not died, had surely been an odd one :" its posterity therefore would be odd ones. However, Costard could make nothing of it : and to this hour the case is an unsolved problem, like the longitude of the north-west passage. Perhaps a water-snake lay basking in the pond.

Of Lord Orford, who, like Costard, was a neighbour and an acquaintance of her father's, Miss Hawkins gives us a very long account ; no less than thirty pages (pp. 87-117) being dedicated to him on his first introduction. Amongst his eccentricities, she mentions that "he made no scruple of avowing his thorough want of taste for Don Quixote." This was already known from the Walpoliana ; where it may be seen that his objection was singularly disingenuous, because built on an incident (the windmill adventure), which, if it were as extravagant as it seems (though it has been palliated by the peculiar appearance of Spanish mills), is yet of no weight, because not *characteristic* of the work : it contradicts its general character. We shall extract her account of Lord Orford's person and *abord*, his

* From this it should seem that Costard was a duck doctor : we remember also a History of Astronomy by one Costard. These facts we mention merely as hints for inquiry, to the editors of the next Variorum Shakspere.

dress and his address, which is remarkably lively and picturesque, as might have been expected from the pen of a female observer, who was at that time young.

"His figure was, as every one knows, not merely tall, but more properly *long*, and slender to excess; his complexion, and particularly his hands, of a most unhealthy paleness. I speak of him before the year 1772. His eyes were remarkably bright and penetrating, very dark and lively: his voice was not strong; but his tones were extremely pleasant, and (if I may so say) highly gentlemanly. I do not remember his common gait: he always entered a room in that style of affected delicacy which fashion had then made almost natural; *chapeau bras* between his hands, as if he wished to compress it, or under his arm; knees bent; and feet on tip toe, as if afraid of a wet floor. His dress in visiting was most usually (in summer when I most saw him) a lavender suit; the waistcoat embroidered with a little silver, or of white silk worked in the tambour; partridge silk stockings; and gold buckles; ruffles and frill generally lace. I remember, when a child, thinking him very much under-dressed, if at any time, except in mourning, he wore hemmed cambric. In summer, no powder; but his wig combed straight, and showing his very smooth pale forehead, and queued behind; in winter, powder." What an amusing old coxcomb!*

Of Dr. Johnson, we have but one anecdote; but it is

* Further on in the volume we have five more pages (pp. 307-312) on the same noble author; to say nothing of three beginning at p. 278, which are imagined by Miss Hawkins to concern Horace Walpole, but which in fact relate, by every word and syllable, to his brother Sir Edward Walpole, and to him only. In both the first and last introduction of Lord Orford, Miss Hawkins contrives to be most amusingly and perversely wrong in all her criticisms, both as relates to his works and to his place in the public esteem. 1. Lord Orford's

very good; and good in the best way—because characteristic; being, in fact, somewhat brutal, and very witty. Miss Knight, the author of *Dinarbas*, and of *Marcus Flaminius*, called to pay him a farewell visit on quitting England for the Continent: this lady (then a young lady) is remarkably large in person; so the old savage dismissed her with the following memorial of his good-nature:— "*Go, go, my dear; for you are too big for an island.*" As may be supposed, the Doctor is no favourite with Miss Hawkins: but she is really too hard upon our old friend; for she declares "that she never heard him say in any visit six words that could compensate for the trouble of getting to his den, and the disgust of seeing such squalidness as she saw nowhere else." One thing at least Miss Hawkins might have learned from Dr. Johnson; and let her not

tragedy (*The Mysterious Mother*) is not the "noxious performance" which she supposes, nor is it a work of any genius. It has no merits which can ever bring it upon the stage; nor, if it *were* brought upon the stage, would it therefore be "time for the virtuous to fly their country, and leave it a prey to wild beasts." In his *choice* of a subject, Lord Orford showed a singular defect of judgment; in his *treatment* of it, he is not intentionally immoral. With depraved taste and feeble sensibilities he is chargeable; but not, as Miss Hawkins asserts, with an act of "enormous indecency." 2. The *Castle of Otranto* is not "a new creation in literature," as she seems to concede (p. 309): on the contrary, it is a most weak and extravagant fiction, in which the coarse, the clumsy, the palpable, and the material, are substituted for the aerial, the spiritual, and the shadowy; the supernatural agency being, as Mr. Hazlitt has most happily expressed it (*Lectures on the Comic Writers*, p. 253), "the pasteboard machinery of a pantomime." 3. With respect to the Chatterton case, Miss Hawkins is wide of the truth by a whole climate. She dates Lord Orford's declension "in the public favour from the time when he resisted the imposition of Chatterton;" and she thinks it "not the usual justice of the world to be angry at a resistance proved so reasonable." But, first, Lord Orford has *not* declined in the public favour: he ranks

suppose that we say it in ill-nature: she might have learned to weed her pages of many barbarisms in language which now disfigure them; for instance, the barbarism of "compensate *for* the trouble"—in the very sentence before us—instead of "compensate the trouble."

Dr. Farmer disappointed Miss Hawkins by "the homeliness of his external." But surely when a man comes to that supper at which he does not eat but is eaten, we have a deeper interest in his wit, which may chance to survive him, than in his beauty, which posterity cannot possibly enjoy any more than the *petits soupers* which it adorned. Had the Doctor been a very Adonis, he could not have done Miss Hawkins so much service as by two of his *propos* which she records: One was, that on a report being mentioned, at her father's table, of Sir Joshua Reynolds having

higher now than he did in Chatterton's lifetime, or his own: his reputation is the same in kind as the *genuine* reputation of Voltaire: both are very spirited memoir writers, and, of the two, Lord Orford is the more brilliant. The critique of his posthumous memoirs, by Miss Hawkins's brother, expresses his pretensions very ably. Secondly, if he *had* declined, it could not have been in the way supposed. Nobody blamed Lord Orford for resisting the imposition of Chatterton. He was right in refusing to be hoaxed: he was not right in detaining Chatterton's papers; and if he did this, not through negligence or inattention, but presuming on Chatterton's rank (as Chatterton himself believed and told him), his conduct was infamous. Be this as it may, his treatment of Chatterton whilst living, was arrogant, supercilious, and with little or no sensibility to his claims as a man of genius: of Chatterton when dead, brutal, and of inhuman hypocrisy; he himself being one of the few men in any century who had practised at a mature age that very sort of forgery which in a boy of seventeen he represented as unpardonable. Did he, or did he not, introduce his own *Castle of Otranto* as a translation from an Italian MS. of one Onufrio Muralto? Do I complain of that masquerading?* Not at all: but I say that the same indulgence, which shelters Horace Earl of Orford, justifies Chatterton.

shared the gains arising from the exhibition of his pictures, with his man-servant, who was fortunately called Ralph, Dr. Farmer quoted against Sir Joshua these two lines from Hudibras:

> "A squire he had whose name was Ralph,
> Who in the adventure went his half."

The other was, that speaking of Dr. Parr, he said that "he seemed to have been at a feast of learning (for *learning*, read *languages*) from which he had carried off all the scraps." Miss Hawkins does not seem to be aware that this is taken from Shakspere: but, what is still more surprising, she declares herself "absolutely ignorant whether it be praise or censure." All we shall say on that question is, that we most seriously advise her not to ask Dr. Parr.

Of Paul Whitehead, we are told that his wife "was so nearly idiotic, that she would call his attention in conversation to look at a cow, not as one of singular beauty, but in the words—'Mr. Whitehead, there's a cow.'" On this Miss Hawkins moralizes in a very eccentric way: "He took it," says she, "most patiently, as he did all such trials of his temper." Trials of his temper! why, was he jealous of the cow? Had he any personal animosity to the cow? Not only, however, was Paul very patient (at least under his bovine afflictions, and his "trials" in regard to horned cattle), but also Paul was very devout; of which he gave this pleasant assurance: "When I go," said he, "into St. Paul's, I admire it as a very fine, grand, beautiful building; and, when I have contemplated its beauty, I come out: but, if I go into Westminster Abbey, d—n me, I'm all devotion." So, by his own account, Paul appears to have been a very pretty fellow; d—d patient, and d—d devout.

For practical purposes, we recommend to all physicians

the following anecdote, which Sir Richard Jebb used to tell of himself: as Miss Hawkins observes, it makes even rapacity comical, and it suggests a very useful and practical hint. "He was attending a nobleman, from whom he had a right to expect a fee of five guineas; he received only three. Suspecting some trick on the part of the steward, from whom he received it, he at the next visit contrived to drop the three guineas. They were picked up, and again deposited in his hand: but he still continued to look on the carpet. His lordship asked if all the guineas were found. 'There must be two guineas still on the carpet,' replied Sir Richard, 'for I have but three.' The hint was taken as he meant."

But of all medical stratagems, commend us to that practised by Dr. Munckley, who had lived with Sir J. Hawkins during his bachelor days in quality of "chum:" and a chum he was, in Miss Hawkin's words, "not at all calculated to render the chum state happy." This Dr. Munckley, by the bye, was so huge a man-mountain, that Miss Hawkins supposes the blank in the well-known epigram,

> "When —— walks the streets, the paviors cry,
> 'God bless you, Sir!' and lay their rammers by,"

to have been originally filled up with his name,—but in this she is mistaken. The epigram was written before he was born; and for about 110 years has this empty epigram, like other epigrams *to be let*, been occupied by a succession of big men: we believe that the original tenant was Dr. Ralph Bathurst. Munckley, however, *might* have been the original tenant, if it had pleased God to let him be born eighty years sooner, for he was quite as well qualified as Bathurst to draw down the blessings of paviors, and to play the part of a "three-man beetle."* Of this Miss

* "Fillip me with a three-man beetle."—*Falstaff, Henry IV.*

Hawkins gives a proof which is droll enough: "accidentally encountering suddenly a stout man-servant in a narrow passage, they literally stuck." Each, like Horatius Cocles, in the words of Seneca, *solus implevit pontis angustias.* One of them, it is clear, must have backed; unless, indeed, they are sticking there yet. It would be curious to ascertain *which* of them backed. For the dignity of science, one would hope it was not Munckley. Yet we fear he was capable of any meanness, if Miss Hawkins reports accurately his stratagems upon her father's purse: a direct attack failing, he attacked it indirectly. But Miss Hawkins shall tell her own tale. "He was extremely rapacious, and a very bad economist; and, soon after my father's marriage, having been foiled in his attempt to borrow money of him, he endeavoured to atone to himself for this disappointment by protracting the duration of a low fever in which he attended him; making unnecessary visits, and with his hand ever open for a fee." Was there ever such a fellow on this terraqueous globe? Sir John's purse not yielding to a storm, he approaches by mining and sapping, under cover of a low fever. Did this Munckley really exist; or is he but the coinage of Miss Hawkins's brain? If the reader wishes to know what became of this "great" man, we will gratify him. He was "foiled," as we have seen, "in his attempt to borrow money" of Sir J. H.: he was also soon after "foiled' in his attempt to live. Munckley, big Munckley, being "too big for an island" we suppose, was compelled to die: he gave up the ghost: and what seems very absurd both to us and to Miss Hawkins, he continued talking to the last, and went off in the very act of uttering a most prosaic truism, which yet happened to be false in his case: for his final words were, that it was "hard to be taken off just then, when he was beginning to get into practice." Not at all, with such

practices as his: where men enter into partnerships with low fevers, it is very fit that they should "back" out of this world as fast as possible; as fast as, in all probability, he had backed down the narrow passage before the stout man-servant. So much for Munckley—big Munckley.

It does not strike us as any "singular feature" (p. 273), in the history of Bartleman, the great singer, "that he lived to occupy the identical house in Berners Street in which his first patron resided." Knowing the house, its *pros* and *cons*, its landlord, &c., surely it was very natural that he should avail himself of his knowledge for his own convenience. But it *is* a very singular fact (p. 160), that our Government should, "merely for want of caution, have sent the *Culloden* ship of war to convoy Cardinal York from Naples." This we suppose Miss Hawkins looks upon as ominous of some disaster; for she considers it "*fortunate*" that his Eminence "had sailed before it arrived." Of this same Cardinal York, Miss Hawkins tells us further that a friend of hers having been invited to dine with him, as all Englishmen were while he kept a table, "found him, as all others did, a good-natured, almost superannuated gentleman, who had his round of civilities and jokes. He introduced some roast beef, by saying that it might not be as good as that in England; *for*, said he, *you know we are but pretenders*." Yes, the Cardinal was a pretender, but his beef was "legitimate;" unless, indeed, his bulls pretended to be oxen.

On the subject of the Pretender, by the way, we have (at p. 63) as fine a *bon-mot* as the celebrated toast of Dr. Byrom, the Manchester Jacobite. "The Marchioness (the Marchioness of Tweeddale) had been Lady Frances Carteret, a daughter of the Earl of Granville, and had been brought up by her Jacobite aunt, Lady Worsley, one of the most

zealous of that party. The Marchioness herself told my father, that on her aunt's upbraiding her when a child with not attending prayers, she answered that she heard her ladyship did not pray for the king. 'Not pray for the king?' said Lady Worsley; 'who says this? I will have you and those who sent you know that I *do* pray for the king; but I do not think it necessary to tell God Almighty *who* is king.'"

This is *naïveté*, which becomes wit to the bystander, though simply the natural expression of the thought to him who utters it. Another instance, no less lively, is the following, mentioned at Strawberry Hill, by "the sister of one of our first statesmen, now deceased." "She had heard a boy, humoured to excess, tease his mother for the remains of a favourite dish: mamma at length replied, 'Then do take it, and have done teasing me.' He then flew into a passion, roaring out, 'What did you give it me for? I wanted to have snatched it.'"

The next passage we shall cite relates to a very eminent character indeed, truly respectable, and entirely English, viz., Plum-pudding. The obstinate and inveterate ignorance of Frenchmen on this subject is well known. Their errors are grievous, pitiable, and matter of scorn and detestation to every enlightened mind. In civilisation, in trial by jury, and many other features of social happiness, it has been affirmed that the French are two centuries behind us. We believe it. But with regard to plum-pudding, they are at least five centuries in arrear. In the *Omniana*, we think it is, Mr. Southey has recorded one of their insane attempts at constructing such a pudding: the monstrous abortion, which on that occasion issued to the light, the reader may imagine, and will be at no loss to understand that volley of "*Diables*," "*Sacres*," and "*Morbleus*,"

which it called forth, when we mention that these deluded Frenchmen made cheese the basis of their infernal preparation. Now under these circumstances of national infatuation, how admirable must have been the art of an English party, who, in the very city of Paris (that centre of darkness on this interesting subject), and in the very teeth of Frenchmen, did absolutely extort from French hands a real English plum-pudding: yes! compelled a French apothecary, unknowing what he did, to produce an excellent plum-pudding, and had the luxury of a hoax into the bargain. Verily, the *ruse* was *magnifique*; and though it was nearly terminating in bloodshed, yet, doubtless, so superb a story would have been cheaply purchased by one or two lives. Here it follows in Miss Hawkins's own words.—"Dr. Schomberg of Reading, in the early part of his life, spent a Christmas at Paris with some English friends. They were desirous to celebrate the season in the manner of their own country, by having, as one dish at their table, an English plum-pudding; but no cook was found equal to the task of compounding it. A clergyman of the party had indeed an old receipt-book; but this did not sufficiently explain the process. Dr. Schomberg, however, supplied all that was wanting, by throwing the recipe into the form of a prescription, and sending it to an apothecary to be made up. To prevent all possibility of error, he directed that it should be boiled in a cloth, and sent in the same cloth, to be applied at an hour specified. At this hour it arrived, borne by the apothecary's assistant, and preceded" (sweet heavens!) "by the apothecary himself, drest, according to the professional formality of the time, with a sword. Seeing, when he entered the apartment, instead of signs of sickness, a table well filled, and surrounded by very merry faces, he perceived that he was

made a party in a joke that turned on himself, and indignantly laid his hand on his sword; but an invitation to taste his own cookery appeased him; and all was well."

This story we pronounce altogether unique: for, as on the one hand, the art was divine by which the benefits of medical punctuality and accuracy were pressed into the service of a Christmas dinner; so, on the other hand, it is strictly and satirically probable, when told of a French apothecary: for who but a Frenchman, whose pharmacopœia still teems with the monstrous compounds of our ancestors, could have believed that such a preparation was seriously designed for a cataplasm.

In our next extracts we come upon ground rather tender and unsafe for obstinate sceptics. We have often heard of learned doctors, from Shrewsbury, suppose, going by way of Birmingham to Oxford; and at Birmingham, under the unfortunate ambiguity of "the Oxford coach," getting into that *from* Oxford, which, by nightfall, safely restored the astonished doctor to astonished Shrewsbury. Such a case is sad and pitiful; but what is that to the case (p. 164) of Willes the painter, who, being "anxious to get a likeness" of "good Dr. Foster" (the same whom Pope has honoured with the couplet,—

> "Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
> Ten metropolitans in preaching well")

"attended his meeting one Sunday evening;" and very naturally, not being acquainted with Dr. Foster's person, sketched a likeness of the clergyman whom he found officiating; which clergyman happened unfortunately to be —not the doctor—but Mr. Morris, an occasional substitute of his. The mistake remained undiscovered: the sketch was elaborately copied in a regular picture: the picture was elaborately engraved in mezzotinto; and to this day

the portrait of one Mr. Morris "officiates" for that of the celebrated Dr. Foster. Living and dead he was Dr. Foster's substitute. Even this, however, is a trifle to what follows: the case "of a Baronet, who must be nameless, who proposed to visit Rome, and previously to learn the language; but by some mistake, or imposition, engaged a German, who taught only his own language, and proceeded in the study of it vigorously for three months before he discovered his error." With all deference to the authority of Horace Walpole, from whom the anecdote originally comes, we confess that we are staggered; and must take leave, in the stoical phrase, to "suspend:" in fact, we must consult our friends before we can contract for believing it: at present, all we shall say about it is, that we greatly fear the Baronet "must," as Miss Hawkins observes, "be nameless."

We must also consult our friends on the propriety of believing the little incident which follows, though attributed to "a very worthy modest young man:" for it is remarkable that of this very modest young man is recorded but one act, viz., the most impudent in the book. "He was walking in the Mall of St. James's Park, when they met two fine young women, drest in straw hats, and, at least to appearance, unattended. His friend offered him a bet that he did not go up to one of those rustic beauties, and salute her. He accepted the bet; and in a very civil manner, and probably explaining the cause of his boldness, he thought himself sure of success, when he became aware that it was the Princess Caroline, daughter of George II. who, with one of her sisters, was taking the refreshment of a walk in complete disguise. In the utmost confusion he bowed, begged pardon, and retreated; whilst their Royal Highnesses, with great good humour, laughed at his mistake."

We shall conclude our extracts with the following story, as likely to interest our fair readers :—

"Lady Lucy Meyrick was by birth the Lady Lucy Pitt, daughter to the Earl of Londonderry, and sister to the last who bore that title. She was, of course, nearly related to all the great families of that name; and losing her parents very early in life, was left under the guardianship of an uncle, who lived in James Street, Buckingham Gate. This house was a most singularly uncouth dismal dwelling, in appearance very much of the Vanburgh style of building; and the very sight of it would justify almost any measure to get out of it. It excited every one's curiosity to ask, What is this place? What can it be for? It had a front of very dark heavy brick-work; very small windows, with sashes immensely thick. In this gay mansion, which looked against the blank window side of the large house in St. James's Park, twenty years ago Lord Milford's, but backwards into a market-gardener's ground, was Lady Lucy Meyrick to reside with her uncle and his daughter, a girl a little older than herself. The young ladies, who had formed a strict friendship, were kept under great restraint, which they bore as two lively girls may be supposed to have done. Their endurances soon reached the ear of two Westminster scholars of one of the Welsh families of Meyrick, who, in the true spirit of knight-errantry, concerted with them a plan for escaping, which they carried into effect. Having gone thus far, there was nothing for the courteous knights to do, but to marry the fair damsels to whom they had rendered this essential service; and for this purpose they took them to the Fleet, or to May-Fair, in both which places marriages were solemnized in the utmost privacy. Here the two couples presented themselves: a baker's wife attending upon the ladies. Lady Lucy was then, and to

the end of her life, one of the smallest women I ever saw: she was at the same time not more than fourteen years of age; and, being in the dress of a child, the person officiating objected to performing the ceremony for her. This extraordinary scrupulosity was distressing; but her ladyship met it by a lively reply—that her cousin might be married first, and then lend her her gown, which would make her look more womanly: but I suppose her right of precedence was regarded; for she used to say herself that she was at last married in the baker's wife's gown. Yet even now, if report be true, an obstacle intervened: the young ladies turned fickle; not, indeed, on the question 'to be or not to be' married, but on their choice of partners: and I was assured that they actually changed—Lady Lucy taking to herself, or acquiescing in taking, the elder brother. What their next step was to have been I know not: the ladies, who had not been missed, returned to their place of endurance; the young gentlemen to school, where they remained, keeping the secret close. When the school next broke up, they went home: and, probably, whilst waiting for courage to avow, or opportunity to disclose, or accident to betray for them the matter, a newly arrived guest fresh from London, in reply, perhaps, to the usual question—What news from town? reported an old story of two Westminster scholars, names unknown, who had (it was said) married two girls in the neighbourhood of the school. The countenances of the two lads drew suspicions upon them; and, confession being made, Lady Lucy was fetched to the house of her father-in-law. His lady, seeing her so very much of a child in appearance, said, on receiving her, in a tone of vexation—'Why, child, what can we do with you? Such a baby as you are, what can you know?' With equal humility and frankness Lady Lucy replied— '

'It is very true, Madam, that I am very young and very ignorant; but whatever you will teach me I will learn.' All the good lady's prejudice was now overcome; and Lady Lucy's conduct proved the sincerity of her submission. She lived seven years in Wales under the tuition of her mother-in-law, conforming to the manners, tempers, and prejudices of her new relations."

We have now "squeezed" a volume of 351 pages, according to our promise: we hope Miss Hawkins will forgive us. She must also forgive us for gently blaming her diction. She says (p. 277), "I read but little English." We thought as much; and wish she read more. The words "duple" (p. 145), "decadence" (p. 123), and "cumbent" (p.), all point to another language than English: as to "*maux*" (p. 254), we know not what language it belongs to, unless it be Coptic. It is certainly not "too big for an island;" but it will not do for this island, and we beg it may be transported. Miss Hawkins says a worse thing, however, of the English language, than that she reads it but little: "instead of admiring my native language," says she, "I feel fettered by it." That may be: but her inability to use it without difficulty and constraint is the very reason why she ought not to pronounce upon its merits: we cannot allow of any person's deciding on the value of an instrument until he has shown himself master of its powers in their whole compass. For some purposes (and those the highest), the English language is a divine instrument: no language is so for all.

When Miss Hawkins says that she reads "little English," the form of the expression implies that she reads a good deal of some more favoured language: may we take the liberty of asking—what? It is not Welsh, we hope? nor Syriac? nor Sungskrita? We say *hope*, for none of these

will yield her anything for her next volume: throughout the Asiatic Researches no soul has been able to unearth a Sanscrit bon-mot. Is it Latin? or Greek? Perhaps both: for, besides some sprinklings of both throughout the volume, she gives us at the end several copies of Latin and Greek verses. These, she says, are her brother's: be they whose they may, we must overhaul them. The Latin are chiefly Sapphics, the Greek chiefly Iambics; the following is a specimen of the Sapphics:—

"One a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns;
If your daughters will not eat them, give them to your sons.
But, if you have none of those pretty little elves,
You cannot do better than eat them yourselves."

"Idem Latine redditum a Viro Clariss. Henrico Hawkins.

"Asse placentam cupiasne solam?
Asse placentas cupiasne binas?
Ecce placentæ, teneræ, tepentes,
Et cruce gratæ.

"Respuant natæ? dato, quæso, natis:
Parvulos tales tibi si negârint
Fata, tu tandem (superest quid ultra?)
Sumito, præsto est."

Our opinion of this translation is, that it is worthy of the original. We hope this criticism will prove satisfactory. At the same time, without offence to Mr. Hawkins, may we suggest that the baker's man has rather the advantage in delicacy of expression and structure of verse? He has also distinguished clearly the alternative of sons and daughters, which the unfortunate ambiguity of "na*tis*" has prevented Mr. Hawkins from doing. Perhaps Mr. Hawkins will consider this against a future edition. Another, viz., a single hexameter is entitled, "De Amandâ, clavibus amissis." Here we must confess to a signal mortification, the table of "Contents" having prepared us to look for some sport; for the title is there printed (by mistake, as it turns out), "De Amandâ, *clavis* amissis," *i.e.*, *On Amanda, upon the*

loss of her cudgels; whereas it ought to have been *clavibus amissis,* on the loss of her keys. Shenstone used to thank God that his name was not adapted to the vile designs of the punster: perhaps some future punster may take the conceit out of him on that point by extracting a compound pun from his name combined with some other word. The next best thing, however, to having a name, or title, that is absolutely pun-proof, is the having one which yields only to Greek puns, or Carthaginian (*i.e., Punic*) puns. Lady Moira has that felicity, on whom Mr. Hawkins has thus punned very seriously in a Greek hexameter :—

"On the death of the Countess of Moira's new-born infant.

"Μοιρα καλη, μ' ετεκες· μ' ανελες μεν, Μοιρα κραταιη."

That is : "Lovely Moira, thou gavest me birth : thou also, violent Moira, tookest me away :" where the first Μοιρα means the Countess, the second is the Greek term for mortal destiny.

Of the iambics we shall give one specimen :—

"Impromptu returned with my lead pencil, which I had left on his table.

"Βοηθος ειμι· καλλιω παντ' εξ εμου·
'Εκ του μολιβδου ἡ νοησις ερχεται."

Pencil is supposed to speak :

"I am a ministerial assistant : from me come all things beautiful. And thus from lead comes intellectual light." The second clause will bear another version, which does not heal its exaggeration, in representing *all* beauty as a product of the lead pencil. And *molibdos,* we fear, which means the common household lead of cisterns, tubes, &c., will not express the *plumbago* of the artist's pencil.

The thought is pretty : some little errors there certainly are, as in the contest with the baker's man ; and in this, as in all his iambics (especially in the three from the Arabic), some little hiatuses in the metre, not adapted to the fastidious race of an Athenian audience. But these

little hiatuses, these "little enormities" (to borrow a phrase from the sermon of a country clergyman),* *will* occur in the best regulated verses. On the whole, our opinion of Mr. Hawkins, as a Greek poet, is, that in seven hundred, or say seven hundred and fifty years—he may become a pretty—yes, we will say, a *very* pretty poet : as he cannot be more than one-tenth of that age at present, we look upon his performances as singularly promising. Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem."

To return to Miss Hawkins ; there are some blunders in facts up and down her book : such, for instance, as that of supposing Sir Francis Drake to have commanded in the succession of engagements with the Spanish Armada of 1588 ; which is the more remarkable, as her own ancestor was so distinguished a person in those engagements. But, upon the whole, her work, if weeded of some trifling tales (as what relates to the young Marquis of Tweeddale's dress, &c.), is creditable to her talents. Her opportunities of observation have been great ; she has generally made good use of them ; and her tact for the ludicrous is striking and useful in a book of this kind. We hope that she will soon favour us with a second volume ; and, in that case, we cannot doubt that we shall again have an orange to squeeze for the public use.

* Seriously, however, Mr. Hawkins's translation of Lord Erskine's celebrated punning epigram on Dr. Lettsom *is* "very clever," as Miss Hawkins thinks it, and wants only a little revision. She is mistaken, however, in supposing that Lord Erskine meant to represent Dr. Lettsom "as illiterate :" the bad grammar was indispensable to the purpose of working the name—*I Lettsom*—into the texture of the verse ; which is accomplished with great ingenuity both in the English and the Greek. The Greek, however by repeated transfusions through the press, has become so tortuously wrong in the last line or two, that in order to evade any delay to the press now at work upon it, I have thrown it to the end of the volume.

HERDER.

WAS Herder a great man? I protest, I cannot say. He is called the German Plato. I will not be so satirical as Coleridge, who, being told by the pastor of Ratzeburg, that Klopstock was the German Milton, said to himself, "Indeed!—I should fancy a very *German* Milton." The truth is, Plato himself is but an idea to most men; nay, even to most scholars; nay, even to most Platonic scholars.* Still, for that very reason, the word "Plato" has a grandeur to the mind, which better acquaintance, if it did not impair, would tend at least to humanize and to make less seraphic. As it is, with the advantage, on Plato's side, of this *ideal* existence, and the disadvantage on Herder's of a language so anti Grecian as the German in everything except its extent, the contest is too unequal. Making allowances for this, however, I still find it difficult to form any judgment of an author so "many-sided" (to borrow a German expression)—so polymorphous as Herder: there is the same sort of difficulty in making an estimate of his merits, as there would be to a political economist in appraising the strength and weakness of an empire like the Chinese, or like the Roman under Trajan: to be just, it must be a representative estimate,

* As, for example, to our English translators, who make the Attic bee talk like an old crone both as to sense and expression. See, too, for a specimen of what Plato does *not* mean, the *Geist der Speculativen Philosophie*, by a tedious man—one Tiedemann.

and therefore abstracted from works, not only many, but also various, and far asunder in purpose and tendency. Upon the whole, the best notion I can give of Herder to the English reader, is to say that he is the German Coleridge; having the same all-grasping erudition, the same spirit of universal research, the same disfiguring superficiality and inaccuracy, the same indeterminateness of object, the same obscure and fanciful mysticism (*schwärmerey*), the same plethoric fulness of thought; the same fine sense of the beautiful, and (I think) the same incapacity for dealing with simple and austere grandeur. I must add, however, that in fineness and compass of understanding, our English philosopher appears to me to have greatly the advantage. In another point they agree, both are men of infinite title-pages. I have heard Coleridge acknowledge that his title-pages alone (titles, that is, of works meditated but unexecuted) would fill a large volume: and, it is clear that, if Herder's power had been commensurate with his will, all other authors must have been put down: many generations would have been unable to read to the end of his works. The weakest point about Herder that I know of, was his admiration of Ossian; a weakness from which, I should think, Coleridge must have been preserved,* if by nothing else, by his much more accurate acquaintance with the face and appearances, fixed and changing, of external nature.

I have been lately much interested by a life of Herder, edited by Professor J. G. Muller, but fortunately written (or chiefly so) by a person far more competent to speak of him with love and knowledge: viz., Maria Caroline, the widow of Herder. Herder had the unspeakable blessing in

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* There is, indeed, a metrical version of *Ny*—what? "Ninithoma," or *Ning*-something in Coleridge's earliest volume of Poems: but that was a very juvenile performance.

this world of an angelic wife, whose company was his consolation under a good deal of worldly distress from secret malice and open hostility. She was admirably fitted to be the wife of a philosopher; for, whilst her excellent sense and her innocent heart enabled her to sympathize fully with the general spirit of Herder's labours, she never appears for a moment to have forgotten her feminine character, but declines all attempt to judge of abstruse questions in philosophy—whatever weight of polemic interest may belong to them in a life of Herder. Her work is very unpretending, and, perhaps, may not have been designed for the public: for it was not published until more than ten years after her death. The title of the book is *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben Joh. Gottfrieds von Herder* (Recollections from the Life of J. G. Herder). 2 vols. Tübingen, 1820.

It appears that Herder rose from the very humblest rank; and, of necessity, therefore, in his youth, but afterwards from inclination, led a life of most exemplary temperance: this is not denied by those who have attacked him. He was never once intoxicated in his whole life: a fact of very equivocal construction! his nerves would not allow him to drink tea; and, of coffee, though very agreeable to him, he allowed himself but little. All this temperance, however, led to nothing: for he died when he was but four months advanced in his sixtieth year. Surely, if he had been a drunkard or an opium-eater, he might have contrived to weather the point of sixty years. In fact, opium would, perhaps, have been of service t him. For all his sufferings were derived from a most exquisite and morbid delicacy of nervous temperament; and of this it was that he died. With more judicious medical advice, he might have been alive at this hour. His nervous system had the

sensitive delicacy of Cowper's and of Rousseau's, but with some peculiarities that belong (in my judgment) exclusively to German temperaments. I cannot explain myself fully on this occasion: but, in general, I will say, that from much observation of the German literature, I perceive a voluptuousness—an animal glow—almost a sensuality in the very intellectual sensibilities of the German, such as I find in the people of no other nation. The French, it will be said, are sensual. Yes: sensual enough. But theirs is a factitious sensuality: a sensual direction is given to their sensibilities by the tone of a vicious literature, and a tone of public and domestic life certainly not virtuous. The fault however in the French is the want of depth and simplicity in their feelings. But, in Germany, the life and habits of the people are generally innocent and simple. Sensuality is nowhere less tolerated: intellectual pleasures nowhere more valued. Yet, in the most intellectual of their feelings, there is still a taint of luxury and animal fervour. Let me give one illustration: In the Paradise Lost, *that* man must have an impure mind who finds the least descent into sensuality in any parts which relate to our first parents in Eden: in no part of his divine works does the purity of Milton's mind shine forth more bright and unsullied: but there is one infirm passage: viz., where Raphael is made to blush on Adam's questioning him about the loves of the heavenly host. The question, in fact, was highly improper, as implying an irregular and unhallowed curiosity not incident to a paradisiacal state. But to make the archangel blush, is to load him with a sin-born shame from which even Adam was free. Now this passage, this single infirm thought of Milton's, is entirely to the taste of Germany; and Klopstock even, who is supposed to support the Hebraic—sublime—and unsensualizing nature against

the more Grecian—voluptuous—and beautiful nature of Wieland, &c., yet indulges in this sensualism to excess.

But to return to Herder: his letters to his wife and children (of which many are given in this work) are delightful; especially those to the former, as they show the infinite, the immeasurable depth of affection which united them. Seldom, indeed, on this earth can there have been a fireside more hallowed by love and pure domestic affections than that of Herder. He wanted only freedom from the cares which oppressed him, and perhaps a little well-boiled opium, combined with a good deal of lemonade or orangeade (of which, as of all fruits, Herder's elegance of taste made him exceedingly fond), to have been the happiest man in Germany. With an angel of a wife, with the love and sympathy of all Germany, and with a medicine for his nerves, what more could the heart of man desire? Yet not having the last, the others were flung away upon him; and, in his latter years, he panted after the invisible world, merely because the visible (as he often declared) ceased to stimulate him. That worst and most widely spread of all diseases, weariness of daily life, inirritability of the nerves to the common stimulants which life supplies, seized upon him to his very heart's core: he was sick of the endless revolution upon his eyes of the same dull unimpassioned spectacle: *tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum*, was the spirit of his ceaseless outcry. He fought with this soul-consuming evil; he wrestled with it as a maniac. Change of scene was suggested; undoubtedly one of the best nervous medicines. Change of scene he tried: he left his home at Weimar, and went to Dresden. There one would think the magnificent library was alone sufficient to stir the nerves even of a paralytic. And so it proved. Herder grew much better: the library, the pic-

ture-gallery, the cathedral service, all tended to regenerate him: he received the most flattering attentions: the Elector of that day (1803) expressed a wish to see him. Herder went, and was honoured with a private interview; in the course of which the Elector, who was a prince of great talents and information, paid him a very high and just compliment. "The impression which the noble-minded prince made upon Herder," says Mrs. Herder, "was deep and memorable. On *his* part, the Elector was highly pleased with Herder, as we have learned from the best authority; and is represented as having afterwards consulted a minister on the possibility of drawing him into his service." From Dresden Herder returned home in high spirits, but soon began to droop again. His last illness and death soon followed; these I shall report from the authentic narrative of Mrs. Herder.

"Full of gratitude, and with many delightful remembrances, did Herder leave Dresden. The three last weeks of his residence in that city were the last sun-gleam that illumined his life. He purposed for the future to spend a few weeks there every now and then, in order to make use of the superb library. On the 18th of September he arrived at home happy and in high spirits. He found our William with us, and gave him such consolation as he could upon the loss of his Amelia. William had come, as if sent from heaven, to support us all in the months of affliction which succeeded, and to tend the sick-bed of his father with Godfrey, Emilius, and Louisa. Herder was full of plans the most elaborate for the approaching winter, such as the consolidation of the secondary schools; the third part of the spirit of the Hebrew poetry; and the letters from Persepolis: of all which, however, it was the will of God that nothing should ever be accomplished. Sometimes,

even up to the last weeks of his life, he confessed to me a strange misgiving, seated in the very depths of his heart—that he should soon be summoned away from Weimar. On the last day of September he held an examination for orders, and in a tone of extraordinary elevation of mind, as all who were present afterwards declared. The subject was—*Upon the Heavenly Hierarchies.* The tenth number of the Adrastea (a periodical work conducted by Herder) was almost arranged and written, in the former half, when the first attack of indisposition seized him (on the 17th or 18th of October).* He soon recovered, and did not keep his bed. At favourable opportunities he continued to labour upon the Adrastea up to that impressive passage with which that number concludes."

[This passage speaks of the northern mythology as given in the Edda, and closes with a few verses describing the awe-stricken state of a human spirit on its first entrance into the presence of God. Mrs. Herder, whose tenderness makes her superstitious, sees in this, as in other incidents of that period, ominous signs of Herder's approaching death.]

"Something it was his intention to have added, and so the sheet lay open on his writing-table. Our dear Godfrey saw that prophetic leaf daily, which was constantly drawing nearer to its fulfilment, with an anxious and foreboding heart, as he afterwards told me. Two months long did the conflict last between his powerful nature and his debilitated and shattered nerves. All his old complaints were re-

* Of October! the indignant reader will exclaim—October in what year? You foolish German editor, that belong to the least accurate and wide awake of all peoples, is it your creed in Germany that there has been but one October in all chronology? The reader, I am well assured, is irritated up to a white heat by this insolent neglect of chronologic dates even in their rudest shape: for the wretch does not condescend even to indicate the *century* with which his narrative is concerned. But I for my part am embarrassed even more than irritated.

awakened. If the physicians prescribed remedies for them, then it irritated his nerves: and so *vice versa*. At length a total atony of all the vital functions came on, which was susceptible of no relief from medicine. And thus he witnessed all his powers sinking, in the fulness of his consciousness, in perfect possession of his intellectual faculties, and in daily hopes of amendment. Except Godfrey (for whose attendance he yearned with inexpressible anxiety) and our own family circle, he would see nobody — at least not with pleasure. To read, or to hear another read, was his dearest consolation. Among the books which were at that time read aloud at his request, I still remember these which follow:—Ossian, Lipsius *De Constantia*, Thorild's *Maximum* (but this was soon laid aside, because it affected him too much), G. Müller's *Remains*, and *the Bible*, especially *the Prophets*. These we exchanged by turns for other works of a more amusing class that would less affect his head; but we never advanced far in any, being soon obliged to lay them by: reading, we found, must not be persevered in for any length of time; so we varied it with talking and with silence. Even the harpsichord, for which he longed so often, affected him too powerfully; and we were soon obliged to interrupt the performance. Often, in the first weeks of his illness, often did he say,—'Oh! if some original, some grand, some spiritual idea would but come to me from whatsoever quarter, would but possess and penetrate my soul, I should be well in a moment.' Yet this feeling was unsteady and often fluctuated. When his sleepless and agitated nights continued, he said, 'My complaint is quite incomprehensible to me; my mind is well, and nothing but my body sick: could I but quit my bed, oh, what labours I would go through!' Certainly he would most gladly have lived, if but for a

short time longer, for the sake of executing many designs; at any rate, to give utterance once again, fully and finally, to the thoughts which lay nearest to his heart.* This feeling he confessed to the physician, Dr. Stark, and to God-

* This is more fully expressed by Mrs. Herder upon another occasion in the course of the interesting account she gives of Herder's gigantic plans and sketches:—"A few only of his later works were written not altogether from any strong impulse of his own nature, but chiefly with a view to the benefit of others. Hence, alas! more important labours went unfinished—labours that lay near to his inmost heart. In the last day of his life he said to our Godfrey, 'He wished he might be permitted to write but two numbers more of the Adrastea: those two should be his last and consummate labour; in them he would deliver his entire Confession of Faith, seeing that many subjects now appeared to him in a far different light.' He complained that 'he had accomplished so little in his life;' said 'that men pitched the tone of their investigations too high and too artificial, when yet human nature lay broad and open before our eyes—like an unrolled manuscript: nothing was required of us but that we should read; instead of which we fancy and devise all sorts of difficulties.'"

It may be judged, from all this, how straitened in point of time Herder must have found himself: so delusive is the impression which Mr. Coleridge has sought to convey in his *Biographia Literaria*, that Herder had found his various duties, as a man of business, reconcilable with his higher duties as an intellectual being, working for his own age and posterity! Indeed, of no man who ever lived, is this more emphatically untrue: but of a hundred similar complaints, in the same passionate style, I select two by way of correcting the misrepresentation of Mr. Coleridge. 1. At p. 214. Mrs. Herder says, "How often would he ejaculate—'Ah, that I had but time—time—time!' His heart was ready to break at the thought of how much that he wished to communicate must be sealed up with himself in the grave." 2. (P. 224) "Many a time in company, when the conversation happened to turn upon confinement in a fortress, he would say pleasantly, but at the same time earnestly—'For my part, I envy the man who is thrown into a dungeon, provided he has a good conscience, and knows how to employ his time. To me no greater service could be rendered, than exactly to shut me up for some years in prison, with permission to pursue my labours, and to procure the

frey. Often did he fling his arms about dear Godfrey's neck, and said, 'Oh, friend! oh, most beloved friend! deliver me; even yet save me, if it be possible.' Ah, heavens! what a spectacle of anguish for us all! Our hopes, though

books I might want. Oh! never was poor soul more wearied out than I am with this hurry of business amongst crowds.'" If, therefore, Herder contrived to do a great deal of business, in the common sense of the word, combined with a great deal of intellectual work, he did it only by sacrificing an answerable proportion of the latter: to do that which any stout man might have been hired to do far better for a guinea a day, he left undone that which only intellectual men, sometimes only himself, could have done. Mr. Coleridge's object could not have been to show us that by a sacrifice to that extent a man might gain time for ordinary business: *that* had never been doubted. His thesis was, that the performance of this ordinary business might be so managed as not only to subtract nothing from the higher employments, but even greatly to assist them: and Herder's case was alleged as a proof and an illustration; with what countenance from Herder himself we here see.

How immense were Herder's plans may be judged by the reader, when he is informed that the following are but a slight fraction of his entire scheme of outlines:—

1 Spanish Literature,........................ } to be exhibited on a great scale.
2. Hebrew; the elder and the latter Jewish Literature,..
3. Icelandic, ...

4. Grecian Mythology to be delivered and interpreted.

5. Natural Philosophy to be studied for some years: this plan was much ripened and extended on occasion of the discovery of galvanism—of his personal acquaintance with Werner, who explained to him in conversation his system of geology—and on occasion of Dr. Gall's Craniological Lectures.

6. Select Tragedies from Shakspere and from the Greek,.. } to be translated.
7. Horace,..
8. Pindar, ...
9. The Bible, ...
10. Ossian, ...

11. A History of Poetry, } to be composed: in 4to of course.
12. A Life of Luther, ...

continually weaker, did not wholly decline, up to the last day: not until, after a mighty struggle of pain in his breast, did he fall into his final slumber on Sunday morning, December 18th. The whole day through he slept in profound tranquillity; nor in this world ever woke again; but at half past eleven at night, gently and without a groan, slumbered away into the arms of God. Oh! tears and anguish that could never waken him again! him that was the only one for whom we lived—our guardian-angel that lived for us. Oh! counsels of the unfathomable God! But thou, heavenly Father, wilt take away the veil from my eyes: all will be revealed; and, perhaps, in no long* period of time!"

Having expressed my inability to adjust the balance of Herder's claims, even to my own satisfaction, it will gratify the reader to see this deficiency supplied by one of the most original men of any age—John Paul Richter, the Rousseau and the Sterne of Germany; whose opportunities for judging of Herder were great beyond those of any other contemporary, with talents equal to the task. Herder was in the habit of holding weekly *conversaziones* to save his own time from unprofitable interruptions: but John Paul was so select a favourite, that, on his visits to Weimar, he seldom attended the public nights, being a privileged guest in the family circle at all times, and when others were excluded. "Of this dear friend," says Mrs. Herder, "I must make a separate mention. He first came to Weimar in the latter half of the year 1790, as if sent by Providence for the especial consolation of Herder, at a time when he was universally misrepresented, and by some people actually shunned, on account of the political and philosophic principles ascribed to him. Different as were their views in regard to many subjects, yet in principle and in feeling they were thoroughly

* She died about two years after writing this passage.

united. The high moral tone of both writers, and their rank as great intellectual physicians for their own age, furnished a natural ground of sympathy with each other that led to the closest friendship. Herder soon loved his young friend ; and his reverence for the great endowments of his mind increased daily. The happy evenings which Richter spent with us, the serenity and youthful freshness of his mind, his burning eloquence, and the inexhaustible life, humour, and originality of his conversation upon everything that came before him, re-animated Herder's existence. Oh ! how often has the genial humour of this great favourite of Germany, in the course of an evening's walk or ride to Ettersburg, beguiled Herder of a world of sad thoughts, and cheated him into smiles and cheerfulness ! In many respects, it is true, that Herder did not approve of John Paul's style and manner : and their amicable differences on this point often led to very instructive conversations. But, for all that, Herder esteemed his native genius, and the teeming creativeness of his poetic spirit, far above the unfeeling and purely *statuesque* poetry of the day, in which everything was sacrificed to mere beauty of *form* ; and in reference to certain poets of the age (no doubt Mrs. Herder alludes chiefly to Wieland), who applied the greatest gift of God to the injury of religion and good morals, thus abusing the divinity of their art to the abasement and brutalizing of man's nature, Herder would often say with a noble scorn : 'Above all such poets our dear friend John Paul stands at an immeasurable elevation : I willingly pardon him his want of ordonnance and of metre, in consideration of his high-toned virtue, his living world, his profound heart, his creative and plastic intellect. He is a true poet, fresh from the hands of God ; and brings new life, truth, virtue, and reality, into our vitiated and emasculated poetry."

The passages in which John Paul* speaks of Herder are many: two in particular I remember of great beauty; one in the *Flegel-jahre*, the other in his last work, *Der Comet* (1821); but not having those works at hand, I will adopt that which is cited by the editor of Mrs. Herder's Memoirs, omitting only such parts as would be unintelligible without explanations of disproportionate length.

"Alike in all the changing periods of his own life, and by the most hostile parties, it was the fate of this great spirit to be misunderstood: and (to speak candidly) not altogether without his own fault. For he had this defect, that he was no star, whether of the first, second, or any other magnitude, but a whole cluster and fasciculus of stars, out of which it is for every one to compose at pleasure a constellation shaped after his own preconception. Monodynamic men, men of a single talent, are rarely misapprehended; men of multitudinous powers, *myriad-minded* men, to use Coleridge's phrase, almost always. . . . If he was no poet, as he would himself often protest, measuring his own pretensions by the Homeric and Shaksperian† standard; he was, however, something still better, namely, a *Poem*, an Indico-Grecian Epopee, fashioned by some divinest and purest architect: how else, or by what analytic skill, should I express the nature of this harmonious soul, in which, as in a poem, all was reconciled and fused; in

* I call him *John Paul*, because he is universally known by that familiar appellation throughout Germany; just as Rousseau is called *Jean Jaques*.

† For the sake of English readers I must mention (to those who know anything of the German literature it is superfluous to mention) that Herder, in common with every man of eminence in modern Germany, paid almost divine honours to Shakspere: his wife tells us in her interesting memoirs of him, that he could repeat Hamlet by heart.

which the good, the beautiful, and the true, were blended and indivisible? Greece was to him the supreme object of devotion, the pole to which his final aspirations pointed: and, universally as he was disposed by his cosmopolitan taste to find and to honour merit, yet did he from his inmost soul yearn, in the very midst of the blooming lands through which he strayed, like any far-travelled Ulysses, for his restoration to a Grecian home; more especially in his latter years. Herder was designed as it were from some breathing Grecian model. Thence came his Grecian reverence for life in all its gradations: like a Brahmin, with a divine Spinozism of the heart, he loved the humblest reptile, the meanest insect, and every blossom of the woods. Thence came the epic style of all his works, which, like a philosophic epos, with the mighty hand and with the impartiality of a God, brought up before the eye* of centuries, and upon a stage of boundless proportions, all times, forms, nations, spirits. Thence also came his Grecian disgust towards all excess, disproportion, or disturbance of equilibrium this way or that. Thence was it that like a Grecian poem he drew by anticipation round about every feeling and emotion a severe line of beauty, which not even the most impassioned was allowed to overstep.

"Few minds have been learned upon the same grand scale as Herder. The major part pursue only what is most rare and least familiar in science: he, on the contrary,

* In the original "vor das Säkularische auge;" and in the true meaning of the word "secular," as it is exhibited by Milton in the fine expression, "A *secular* bird," meaning the phœnix, I might have translated it, before the secular eye: but the vulgar theologic sense of the word in English would have led to a misinterpretation of the meaning. No other equivalent term occurs to me, except *Aeonian;* and *that* is too uncommon to be generally intelligible.

could receive only the great and catholic streams of every science into the mighty depths of his own heaven-reflecting ocean, that impressed upon them all its own motion and fluctuation. Others are fastened upon by their own learning as by a withering and strangling ivy; but *his* hung about him as gracefully as the tendrils of a vine, and adorned him with fruit as with clusters of grapes. . . . How magnificently, how irreconcilably, did he blaze into indignation against the creeping and crawling vermin of the times; against German coarseness of taste; against all sceptres in brutal paws; and against the snakes of the age! But would you hear the sweetest of voices, it was *his* voice in the utterance of love; whether for a little child, or for poetry, or for music, or in the tones of mercy and forbearance towards the weak. In general he has been little weighed or appraised, and in parts only; never as a whole. His due valuation he will first find in the diamond scales of posterity; into which scales will assuredly not be admitted the pebbles with which he was pelted by the coarse critics of his days, and the still coarser disciples of Kant. . . . Two sayings of his survive, which may seem trifling to others; me they never fail to impress profoundly: one was, that on some occasion, whilst listening to choral music that streamed from a neighbouring church as from the bosom of some distant century, he wished, with a sorrowful allusion to the cold frosty spirit of these times, that he had been born in the middle ages. The other, and a far different sentiment, was, that he would gladly communicate with an apparition from the spiritual world, and that he neither felt nor foreboded anything of the usual awe connected with such a communication. Oh, the pure soul that already held commerce with spirits! To such a soul this was possible, poetical as *that* soul was; and

though it be true that just such souls it is that shudder with the deepest awe before the noiseless and inaudible mysteries that dwell and walk on the other side of death; to his soul it was possible; for the spirit of Herder was itself an apparition upon this earth, and never forgot its native world. At this moment I think I see him; and, potent as death is otherwise to glorify the images of men with saintly transfiguration, yet methinks that from the abyss of distance and of sunless elevation he appears not more radiant or divine than he did here below; and I think of him, far aloft in the heavens and behind the stars, as in his *natural* place; and as of one but little altered from what he was, except by the blotting out of his earthly sorrows."

What is said of the disciples of Kant in the above extract is to be explained thus: Herder when a young man had studied at Königsberg; and, in consideration of his poverty, Kant had allowed him to attend his lectures gratis. Herder was sensible (though from the style of his own mind insufficiently sensible) of Kant's greatness; and in after life often spoke publicly of Kant with great reverence. Kant, on the other hand, admired his pupil, and augured well of his future success; but never dissembled his disapprobation of what he considered crazy and visionary enthusiasm (*Schwärmerey*). This feeling, openly and frankly expressed, seems in youth to have given Herder little offence: but in after life, being repeated to him, perhaps with some ill-natured aggravations, so wounded his own self-esteem, that he attempted to avenge himself by an attack upon Kant's great work, the *Kritik der R. Vernunft*, in a Metakritik. Of this attack, which was in truth perfectly feeble, Kant took no sort of notice: and it fell into immediate contempt. But the followers of Kant through-

out Germany could not forgive the insult offered to their master; and too often allowed themselves, in their indignation at this instance of infirmity in Herder, to forget his real services to literature and philosophy.

NOTE.—Many readers will have read, in the public journals of Europe, that one eminent *littérateur* of Germany within the last half century had died in the act of shouting out clamorously—"*Light, I say!—more light!*" But, on reading the life of another not less selebrated, we find that he died in effect shouting with agonizing emphasis—"*Time, I say!—more time!*" And who was this frantic patient that signalized his farewell intercourse with the world by maniacal shrieks for time? It was Herder, the very man (or leader of the men) whom Coleridge alleged in proof of his position--that intellectual labours need not *so* to press upon any man's nervous system, but that he might still find ample openings for every sort of worldly business. This doctrine I subsequently disputed, and out of my paper arose, some years later, a very beautiful vindication of her father's views, from the pen of his most accomplished daughter (the widow of her cousin). Entertaining myself the very highest respect for the great natural endowments and really astonishing attainments of this interesting lady, I had fancied that the best way to show this respect, was by a grave examination of her arguments and her exemplifications. But before I could accomplish this task satisfactorily, to my own profound sorrow Mrs. Coleridge was carried off by an organic malady for which medicine has no relief. I am suddenly reminded of it however, and in an impressive way, by the statements of Mrs. Herder, especially at pp. 124, 125. These revelations fall with crushing effect—not upon anything separately belonging to Mrs. Coleridge, but upon the whole conduct of the argument (as it stands in his *Biographia Literaria*) by her father. Mrs. Coleridge's own beautiful papers will be found towards the end of some volume in the series of her father's select works, as republished by herself.

IDEA OF A UNIVERSAL HISTORY ON A COSMO-POLITICAL PLAN.

BY IMMANUEL KANT.

WHATSOEVER difference there may be in our notions of the *freedom of the will* metaphysically considered, it is evident that the manifestations of this will, viz., human actions, are as much under the control of universal laws of nature as any other physical phenomena. It is the province of history to narrate these manifestations; and let their causes be ever so secret, we know that history, simply by taking its station at a distance and contemplating the agency of the human will upon a large scale, aims at unfolding to our view a regular stream of tendency in the great succession of events; so that the very same course of incidents, which taken separately and individually would have seemed perplexed, incoherent, and lawless, yet viewed in their connexion and as the actions of the human *species* and not of independent beings, never fail to discover a steady and continuous though slow development of certain great predispositions in our nature. Thus, for instance, deaths, births, and marriages, considering how much they are separately dependent on the freedom of the human will, should seem to be subject to no law according to which any calculation could be made beforehand on their amount: and yet the yearly registers of these events in great coun-

tries prove that they go on with as much conformity to the laws of nature as the oscillations of the weather: these, again, are events which in detail are so far irregular that we cannot predict them individually; and yet, taken as a whole series, we find that they never fail to support the growth of plants, the currents of rivers, and other arrangements of nature in a uniform and uninterrupted course. Individual men, and even nations, are little aware that, whilst they are severally pursuing their own peculiar and often contradictory purposes, they are unconsciously following the guidance of a great natural purpose which is wholly unnoticed by themselves; and are thus promoting and making efforts for a great process which, even if they perceived it, they would little regard.

Considering that men, taken collectively as a body, do not proceed like brute animals under the law of an instinct, nor yet again, like rational cosmopolites, under the law of a preconcerted plan, one might imagine that no systematic history of their actions (such, for instance, as the history of bees or beavers) could be possible. At the sight of the actions of man displayed on the great stage of the world, it is impossible to escape a certain degree of disgust: with all the occasional indications of wisdom scattered here and there, we cannot but perceive the whole sum of these actions to be a web of folly, childish vanity, and often even of the idlest wickedness and spirit of destruction. Hence, at last, one is puzzled to know what judgment to form of our species so conceited of its high advantages. In such a perplexity there is no resource for the philosopher but this, that, finding it impossible to presume in the human race any *rational* purpose of its own, he must endeavour to detect some *natural* purpose in such a senseless current of human actions; by means of which a history of creatures

that pursue no plan of their own may yet admit a systematic form as the history of creatures that are blindly pursuing a plan of nature. Let us now see whether we can succeed in finding out a clue to such a history; leaving it to nature to produce a man capable of executing it. Just as she produced a Kepler who unexpectedly brought the eccentric courses of the planets under determinate laws; and afterwards a Newton who explained these laws out of a universal ground in nature.

PROPOSITION THE FIRST.

All tendencies of any creature, to which it is predisposed by nature, are destined in the end to develop themselves perfectly and agreeably to their final purpose.

External as well as internal (or anatomical) examination confirms this remark in all animals. An organ which is not to be used, a natural arrangement that misses its purpose, would be a contradiction in physics. Once departing from this fundamental proposition, we have a nature no longer tied to laws, but objectless and working at random; and a cheerless reign of chance steps into the place of reason.

PROPOSITION THE SECOND.

In man, as the sole rational creature upon earth, those tendencies which have the use of his reason for their object are destined to obtain their perfect development in the species only, and not in the individual.

Reason in a creature is a faculty for extending the rules and purposes of the exercise of all its powers far beyond natural instinct, and it is illimitable in its plans. It works, however, not instinctively, but tentatively, by means of practice, through progress and regress, in order to ascend

gradually from one degree of illumination to another. On this account either it would be necessary for each man to live an inordinate length of time in order to learn how to make a perfect use of his natural tendencies; or else, supposing the actual case that nature has limited his term of life, she must then require an incalculable series of generations (each delivering its quota of knowledge to its immediate successor) in order to ripen the germs which she has laid in our species to that degree of development which corresponds with her final purpose. And the period of this mature development must exist at least in idea to man as the object of his efforts: because otherwise his own natural predispositions must of necessity be regarded as objectless; and this would at once take away all *practical* principles, and would expose nature, the wisdom of whose arrangements must in all other cases be assumed as a fundamental postulate, to the suspicion of capricious dealing in the case of man only.

PROPOSITION THE THIRD.

It is the will of nature that man should owe to himself alone everything which transcends the mere mechanic constitution of his animal existence; and that he should be susceptible of no other happiness or perfection than what he has created for himself, instinct apart, through his own reason.

Nature does nothing superfluously; and in the use of means to her ends does not play the prodigal. Having given to man reason, and freedom of the will grounded upon reason, she had hereby sufficiently made known the purpose which governed her in the choice of the furniture and appointments, intellectual and physical, with which she has accoutred him. Thus provided, he had no need for the

guidance of instinct, or for knowledge and forethought created to his hand; for these he was to be indebted to himself. The means of providing for his own shelter from the elements, for his own security, and the whole superstructure of delights which add comfort and embellishment to life, were to be the work of his own hands. So far indeed has she pushed this principle, that she seems to have been frugal even to niggardliness in the dispensation of her animal endowments to man, and to have calculated her allowance to the nicest rigour of the demand in the very earliest stage of his existence: as if it had been her intention hereby to proclaim that the highest degree of power, of intellectual perfection, and of happiness to which he should ever toil upwards from a condition utterly savage, must all be wrung and extorted from the difficulties and thwartings of his situation, and the merit therefore be exclusively his own; thus implying that she had at heart his own rational self-estimation rather than his convenience or comfort. She has indeed beset man with difficulties; and in no way could she have so clearly made known that her purpose with man was not that he might live in pleasure; but that by a strenuous wrestling with those difficulties he might make himself worthy of living in pleasure. Undoubtedly it seems surprising on this view of the case that the earlier generations appear to exist only for the sake of the latter, viz., for the sake of forwarding that edifice of man's grandeur in which only the latest generations are to dwell, though all have undesignedly taken part in raising it. Mysterious as this appears, it is, however, at the same time necessary, if we once assume a race of rational animals, as destined by means of this characteristic reason to a perfect development of their tendencies, and subject to mortality in the individual but immortal in the species.

PROPOSITION THE FOURTH.

The means, which nature employs to bring about the development of all the tendencies she has laid in man, is the antagonism of these tendencies in the social state —no farther, however, than to that point at which this antagonism becomes the cause of social arrangements founded in law.

By antagonism of this kind I mean the *unsocial sociality* of man; that is, a tendency to enter the social state combined with a perpetual resistance to that tendency which is continually threatening to dissolve it. Man has gregarious inclinations, feeling himself in the social state more than man by means of the development thus given to his natural tendencies. But he has also strong anti-gregarious inclinations prompting him to insulate himself, which arise out of the unsocial desire (existing concurrently with his social propensities) to force all things into compliance with his own humour; a propensity to which he naturally anticipates resistance from his consciousness of a similar spirit of resistance to others existing in himself. Now, this resistance it is which awakens all the powers of man, drives him to master his propensity to indolence, and in the shape of ambition, love of honour, or avarice impels him to procure distinction for himself amongst his fellows. In this way arise the first steps from the savage state to the state of culture, which consists peculiarly in the social worth of man: talents of every kind are now unfolded, taste formed, and by gradual increase of light a preparation is made for such a mode of thinking as is capable of converting the rude natural tendency to moral distinctions into determinate practical principles, and finally of exalting a social concert that had been *pathologically* extorted from the mere neces-

sities of situation into a *moral* union founded on the reasonable choice. But for these anti-social propensities, so unamiable in themselves, which give birth to that resistance which every man meets with in his own self-interested pretensions, an Arcadian life would arise of perfect harmony and mutual love such as must suffocate and stifle all talents in their very germs. Men, as gentle as the sheep they fed, would communicate to their existence no higher value than belongs to mere animal life; and would leave the vacuum of creation which exists in reference to the final purpose of man's nature as a rational nature, unfilled. Thanks, therefore, to nature for the enmity, for the jealous spirit of envious competition, for the insatiable thirst after wealth and power! These wanting, all the admirable tendencies in man's nature would remain for ever undeveloped. Man, for his own sake as an individual, wishes for concord; but nature knows better what is good for man as a species; and she ordains discord. He would live in ease and passive content: but nature wills that he shall precipitate himself out of this luxury of indolence into labours and hardships, in order that he may devise remedies against them, and thus raise himself above them by an intellectual conquest, not sink below them by an unambitious evasion. The impulses, which she has with this view laid in his moral constitution, the sources of that anti-sociality and universal antagonism from which so many evils arise, but which again stimulate a fresh reaction of the faculties, and by consequence more and more aid the development of the primitive tendencies, all tend to betray the adjusting hand of a wise Creator, not that of an evil spirit that has bungled in the execution of his own designs, or has malevolently sought to perplex them with evil.

PROPOSITION THE FIFTH.

The highest problem for the human species, to the solution of which it is irresistibly urged by natural impulses, is the establishment of a universal civil society founded on the empire of political justice.

Since it is only in the social state that the final purpose of nature with regard to man (viz., the development of all his tendencies) can be accomplished, and in such a social state as combines with the utmost possible freedom, and consequent antagonism of its members, the most rigorous determination of the boundaries of this freedom, in order that the freedom of such individual may co-exist with the freedom of others; and since it is the will of nature that this as well as all other objects of his destination should be the work of men's own efforts,—on these accounts a society in which freedom under laws is united with the greatest possible degree of irresistible power, *i.e.*, a perfect civil constitution, is the highest problem of nature for man: because it is only by the solution of this problem that nature can accomplish the rest of her purposes with our species. Into this state of restraint man, who is otherwise so much enamoured of lawless freedom, is compelled to enter by necessity, and that the greatest of all necessity, viz., a necessity self-imposed; his natural inclinations making it impossible for man to preserve a state of perfect liberty for any length of time in the neighbourhood of his fellows. But, under the restraint of a civil community, these very inclinations lead to the best effects: just as trees in a forest, for the very reason that each endeavours to rob the other of air and sun, compel each other to shoot upwards in quest of both; and thus attain a fine erect growth: whereas those which stand aloof from each other under no mutual re-

straint, and throw out their boughs at pleasure, become crippled and distorted. All the gifts of art and cultivation which adorn the human race, in short the most beautiful forms of social order, are the fruits of the anti-social principle, which is compelled to discipline itself, and by means won from the very resistance of man's situation in this world to give perfect development to all the germs of nature.

PROPOSITION THE SIXTH.

This problem is at the same time the most difficult of all, and the one which is latest solved by man.

The difficulty, which is involved in the bare idea of such a problem, is this : Man is an animal that, so long as he lives amongst others of his species, stands in need of a master. For he inevitably abuses his freedom in regard to his equals ; and, although as a reasonable creature, he wishes for a law that may set bounds to the liberty of all, yet do his self-interested animal propensities seduce him into making an exception in his own favour whensoever he dares. He requires a master, therefore, to curb his will, and to compel him into submission to a universal will which may secure the possibility of universal freedom. Now, where is he to find this master? Of necessity amongst the human species. But, as a human being, this master will also be an animal that requires a master. Lodged in one or many, it is impossible that the supreme and irresponsible power can be certainly prevented from abusing its authority. Hence it is that this problem is the most difficult of any ; nay, its perfect solution is impossible : out of wood so crooked and perverse as that which man is made of, nothing absolutely straight can ever be wrought. An approximation to this idea is therefore all which nature enjoins us That it is also the last of all problems, to which the human

species addresses itself, is clear from this, that it presupposes *just notions* of the nature of a good constitution, great *experience*, and above all a *will* favourably disposed to the adoption of such a constitution; three elements that can hardly, and not until after many fruitless trials, be expected to concur.

PROPOSITION THE SEVENTH.

The problem of the establishment of a perfect constitution of society depends upon the problem of a system of international relations adjusted to law; and, apart from this latter problem, cannot be solved.

To what purpose is labour bestowed upon a civil constitution adjusted to law for individual men, *i.e.*, upon the creation of a commonwealth? The same anti-social impulses, which first drove men to such a creation, is again the cause, that every commonwealth in its external relations, *i.e.*, as a state in reference to other states, occupies the same ground of lawless and uncontrolled liberty; consequently each must anticipate from the other the very same evils which compelled individuals to enter the social state. Nature accordingly avails herself of the spirit of enmity in man, as existing even in the great national corporations of that animal, for the purpose of attaining through the inevitable antagonism of this spirit a state of rest and security; *i.e.*, by wars, by the immoderate exhaustion of incessant preparations for war, and by the pressure of evil consequences which war at last entails upon any nation even through the midst of peace,—she drives nations to all sorts of experiments and expedients; and finally, after infinite devastations, ruin, and universal exhaustion of energy, to one which reason should have suggested without the cost of so sad an experience; viz., to quit the barbarous condition

of lawless power, and to enter into a federal league of nations, in which even the weakest member looks for its rights and for protection—not to its own power, or its own adjudication, but to this great confederation (*Fœdus Amphictyonum*), to the united power, and the adjudication of the collective will. Visionary as this idea may seem, and as such laughed at in the Abbé de St. Pierre and in Rousseau (possibly because they deemed it too near to its accomplishment),—it is notwithstanding the inevitable * resource and mode of escape under that pressure of evil which nations reciprocally inflict; and, hard as it may be to realize such an idea, states must of necessity be driven at last to the very same resolution to which the savage man of nature was driven with equal reluctance—viz., to sacrifice brutal liberty, and to seek peace and security in a civil constitution founded upon law. All wars therefore are so many tentative essays (not in the intention of man, but in the intention of nature) to bring about new relations of states, and by revolutions and dismemberments to form new political bodies: these again, either from internal defects or external attacks, cannot support themselves, but must undergo similar revolutions; until at last, partly by the best possible arrangement of civil government within, and partly

* During the two last centuries (*i. e.*, from the date of the scheme for organizing Christendom for some common purpose, no matter what, by the first of the Bourbons, Henry IV. of France, down to the late congresses at Aix-la-Chapelle and Verona) the human species have been making their first rude essays—putting forth their feelers as it were—towards such an idea.—The reader must not confound (as too generally is done) that St. Pierre to whom Kant refers, viz., the visionary who speculated on the means of abolishing war, with the sentimentalist of our own century, author of *Paul and Virginia*, *Studies of Nature*, &c. The first was at work early in the 18th century, say 1720—the other was patronized by the first Napoleon during his Consulate, consequently entered the 19th century.

by common concert and legal compact without, a condition is attained which, like a well-ordered commonwealth, can maintain itself in the way of an automaton.

Now, whether (in the first place) it is to be anticipated from an epicurean concourse of efficient causes that states, like atoms, by accidental shocking together, should go through all sorts of new combinations to be again dissolved by the fortuitous impulse of fresh shocks, until at length by pure accident some combination emerges capable of supporting itself (a case of luck that could hardly be looked for): or whether (in the second place) we should rather assume that nature is in this instance pursuing her regular course of raising our species gradually from the lower steps of animal existence to the very highest of a human existence, and *that* not by any direct interposition in our favour, but through man's own spontaneous and artificial efforts (spontaneous, but yet extorted from him by his situation), and in this apparently wild arrangement of things is developing with perfect regularity the original tendencies she has implanted: or whether (in the third place) it is more reasonable to believe that out of all this action and reaction of the human species upon itself nothing in the shape of a wise result will ever issue; that it will continue to be as it has been; and therefore that it cannot be known beforehand, but that the discord, which is so natural to our species, will finally prepare for us a hell of evils under the most moral condition of society, such as may swallow up this very moral condition itself and all previous advance in culture by a reflux of the original barbaric spirit of desolation (a fate, by the way, against which it is impossible to be secured under the government of blind chance, with which liberty uncontrolled by law is identical, unless by underlaying this chance with a secret nexus of wisdom):—

to all this the answer turns upon the following question; whether it be reasonable to assume a final purpose of all natural processes and arrangements in the parts, and yet a want of purpose in the whole? What therefore the objectless condition of savage life effected in the end, viz., that it checked the development of the natural tendencies in the human species, but then, by the very evils it thus caused, drove man into a state where those tendencies could unfold and mature themselves, namely, the state of civilisation; that same service is performed for states by the barbaric freedom in which they are now existing, viz., that, by causing the dedication of all national energies and resources to war, by the desolations of war and still more by causing the necessity of standing continually in a state of preparation for war, it checks the full development of the natural tendencies in its progress; but on the other hand, by these very evils and their consequences, it compels our species at last to discover some law of counterbalance to the principle of antagonism between nations, and in order to give effect to this law to introduce a federation of states and consequently a cosmopolitical condition of security (or police)—corresponding to that municipal security which arises out of internal police. This federation will itself not be exempt from danger, else the powers of the human race would go to sleep; it will be sufficient that it contain a principle for restoring the equilibrium between its own action and reaction, and thus checking the two functions from destroying each other. Before this last step is taken, human nature—then about half way advanced in its progress—is in the deepest abyss of evils under the deceitful semblance of external prosperity; and Rousseau was not so much in the wrong when he preferred the condition of the savage to that of the civilized man at the point where he

has reached, but is hesitating to take the final step of his ascent. We are at this time in a high degree of *culture* as to arts and sciences. We are *civilized* to superfluity in what regards the graces and decorums of life. But to entitle us to consider ourselves *moralized* much is still wanting. Yet the idea of morality belongs even to that of *culture;* but the use of this idea, as it comes forward in mere *civilisation*, is restrained to its influence on manners, as seen in the principle of honour, in respectability of deportment, &c. Nothing indeed of a true moral influence can be expected so long as states direct all their energies to idle plans of aggrandizement by force, and thus incessantly check the slow motions by which the intellect of the species is unfolding and forming itself, to say nothing of their shrinking from all *positive* aid to those motions. But all good, that is not engrafted upon moral good, is mere show and hollow speciousness—the dust and ashes of mortality. And in this delusive condition will the human race linger, until it shall have toiled upwards in the way I have mentioned from its present chaotic abyss of political relations.

PROPOSITION THE EIGHTH.

The history of the human species as a whole may be regarded as the unravelling of a hidden plan of nature for accomplishing a perfect state of civil constitution for society in its internal relations (and, as the condition of that, by the last proposition in its external relations also) as the sole state of society in which the tendencies of human nature can be all and fully developed.

This proposition is an inference from the preceding. A question arises upon it—whether experience has yet observed any traces of such an unravelling in history. I

answer—some little: for the whole period (to speak astronomically) of this unravelling is probably too vast to admit of our collecting even the form of its orbit or the relation of the parts to the whole from the small fraction of it which man has yet left behind him; just as little as it is possible from the astronomical observations hitherto made to determine the course which our sun together with his whole system of planets pursues amongst the heavenly host: although upon universal grounds derived from the systematic frame of the universe, as well as upon the little stock of observation as yet accumulated, enough is known to warrant us in asserting that there *is* such a course. Meantime our human nature obliges us to take an interest even in the remotest epoch to which our species is destined, provided we can anticipate it with certainty. So much the less can *we* be indifferent to it, inasmuch as it appears within our power by intellectual arrangements to contribute something towards the acceleration of the species in its advance to this great epoch. On this account the faintest traces of any approximation in such a direction become of importance to us. At present all states are so artificially inter-connected, that no one can possibly become stationary in its internal culture without retrograding in power and influence with respect to all the rest; and thus if not the progress yet the non-declension of this purpose of nature is sufficiently secured through the ambition of nations. Moreover, civil liberty cannot at this day any longer be arrested in its progress but that all the sources of livelihood, and more immediately trade, must betray a close sympathy with it, and sicken as *that* sickens; and hence a decay of the state in its external relations. Gradually, too, this liberty extends itself. If the citizen be hindered from pursuing his interest in any way most agreeable to himself, provided

only it can co-exist with the liberty of others, in that case the vivacious life of general business is palsied, and in connexion with that again the powers of the whole. Hence it arises that all personal restriction, whether as to commission or omission, is more and more withdrawn; religious liberty is established; and thus by little and little, with occasional interruptions, arises *Illumination;* a blessing which the human race must win even from the self-interested purposes of its rulers, if they comprehend what is for their own advantage. Now this illumination, and with it a certain degree of cordial interest which the enlightened man cannot forbear taking in all the good which he perfectly comprehends, must by degrees mount upwards even to the throne, and exert an influence on the principles of government. At present, for example, our governments have no * money disposable for national education, because the estimates for the next war have absorbed the whole by anticipation: the first act, therefore, by which the state will express its interest in the advancing spirit of the age, will be by withdrawing its opposition at least to the feeble and tardy exertions of the people in this direction. Finally, war itself becomes gradually not only so artificial a process, so uncertain in its issue, but also in the after-pains of inextinguishable national debts (a contrivance of modern times) so anxious and burthensome; and, at the same time, the influence which any convulsions of one state exert upon every other state is so remarkable in our quarter of the globe—linked as it is in all parts by the systematic intercourse of trade—that at length those governments,

* "*No money disposable,*" &c. The reader must remember that this was written in Germany in the year 1784, and in the midst of petty courts (which are generally the most profligate). In England, and even elsewhere, there is now the dawn of a better system.—*Tr.*

which have no immediate participation in the war, under a sense of their own danger, offer themselves as mediators, though as yet without any authentic sanction of law, and thus prepare all things from afar for the formation of a great primary state-body, or cosmopolitic Areopagus, such as is wholly unprecedented in all preceding ages. Although this body at present exists only in rude outline, yet already a stirring is beginning to be perceptible in all its limbs, each of which is interested in the maintenance of the whole; even now there is enough to justify a hope that, after many revolutions and remodellings of states, the supreme purpose of nature will be accomplished in the establishment of a cosmopolitic state as the bosom in which all the original tendencies of the human species are to be developed.

PROPOSITION THE NINTH.

A philosophical attempt to compose a universal history in the sense of a cosmo-political history upon a plan tending to unfold the purpose of nature in a perfect civil union of the human species (instead of the present imperfect union), is to be regarded as possible, and as capable even of helping forward this very purpose of nature.*

At first sight it is certainly a strange and apparently an extravagant project, to propose a history of man founded on any idea of the course which human affairs would take

* The reader must remember what Kant means by a *universal history:* in the common sense, as the history of the whole world in its separate divisions, such a history exists already in many shapes that perhaps could not be essentially improved. But in Kant's sense, as a history of the whole *as* a whole, no essay has been made towards it.—*Tr.*

if adjusted to certain reasonable ends. On such a plan it may be thought that nothing better than a romance could be the result. Yet if we assume that nature proceeds not without plan and final purpose even in the motions of human free-will, this idea may possibly turn out very useful; and, although we are too short-sighted to look through the secret mechanism of her arrangements, this idea may yet serve as a clue for connecting into something like *systematic* unity the great abstract of human actions that else seem a chaotic and incoherent *aggregate*. For if we take our beginning from the Grecian history, as the depository, or at least the collateral voucher for all elder or synchronous history; if we pursue down to our own times its influence upon the formation and malformation of the Roman people as a political body that swallowed up the Grecian state, and the influence of Rome upon the barbarians by whom Rome itself was destroyed; and if to all this we add, by way of episode, the political history of every other people so far as it has come to our knowledge through the records of the two enlightened nations above mentioned;* we shall then discover a regular gradation of improvement in civil polity as it has grown up in our quarter of the globe, which quarter is in all probability destined to give laws to all the rest. If further we direct

* A *learned public* only, that has endured unbroken from its commencement to our days, can be an authentic witness for ancient history. Beyond that, all is *terra incognita;* and the history of nations who lived without that circle must start from time to time as they happened to come within it. This took place with the Jewish people about the time of the Ptolemies, and chiefly through the Septuagint translation of the Bible; apart from which, but little credit should be given to their own insulated accounts unsupported by collateral evidence. From this point we may pursue their records upwards, and so of all other nations.

an exclusive attention to the civil constitution, with its laws, and the external relations of the state, in so far as both, by means of the good which they contained, served for a period to raise and to dignify other nations and with them the arts and sciences, yet again by their defects served also to precipitate them into ruin, but so that always some germ of illumination survived which, being more and more developed by every revolution, prepared continually a still higher step of improvement: in that case, I believe that a clue will be discovered not only for the unravelling of the intricate web of human affairs, and for the guidance of future statesmen in the art of political prophecy (a benefit which has been extracted from history even whilst it was regarded as an incoherent result from a lawless freedom of will), but also such a clue as will open a consolatory prospect into futurity, in which at a remote distance we shall discover the human species seated upon an eminence won by infinite toil where all the germs are unfolded which nature has implanted, and its destination upon this earth accomplished. Such a justification of nature, or rather of providence, is no mean motive for choosing this cosmo-political station for the survey of history. For what does it avail to praise and to draw forth to view the magnificence and wisdom of the creation in the irrational kingdom of nature, if that part in the great stage of the supreme wisdom, which contains the object of all this mighty display, viz., the history of the human species, is to remain an eternal objection to it, the bare sight of which obliges us to turn away our eyes with displeasure, and (from the despair which it raises of ever discovering in it a perfect and rational purpose) finally leads us to look for such a purpose only in another world?

My object in this essay would be wholly misinterpreted,

if it were supposed that under the idea of a cosmo-political history which to a certain degree has its course determined *à priori*, I had any wish to discourage the cultivation of *empirical* history in the ordinary sense : on the contrary, the philosopher must be well versed in history who could execute the plan I have sketched, which is indeed a most extensive survey of history, only taken from a new station. However the extreme, and, simply considered, praiseworthy circumstantiality, with which the history of every nation is written in our times, must naturally suggest a question of some embarrassment. In what way will our remote posterity be able to cope with the enormous accumulation of historical records which a few centuries will bequeath to them? There is no doubt that they will estimate the historical details of times far removed from their own, the original monuments of which will long have perished, simply by the value of that which will then concern themselves, viz., by the good or evil performed by nations and their governments in a *cosmo-political* view. To direct the eye upon this point as connected with the ambition of rulers and their servants, in order to guide them to the only means of bequeathing an honourable record of themselves to distant ages, may furnish some small motive (over and above the great one of justifying providence), for attempting a philosophic history on the plan I have here explained.

CHARLEMAGNE.*

HISTORY is sometimes treated under the splendid conception of "philosophy teaching by example;" and sometimes as an "old almanac;" and, agreeably to this latter estimate, we ourselves once heard a celebrated living professor† of surgery, who has been since distinguished by royal favour, and honoured with a title, making it his boast that he had never charged his memory with one single historical fact; that on the contrary he had, out of profound contempt for a sort of knowledge so utterly without value in his eyes, anxiously sought to extirpate from his remembrance, or, if that were impossible, to perplex and confound, any relics of historical records which might happen to survive from his youthful studies. "And I am happy to say," added he, "and it is consoling to have it in my power conscientiously to declare, that, although I have not been able to dismiss entirely from my mind some ridiculous fact about a succession of four great monarchies, since human infirmity still clings to our best efforts, and will for ever prevent our attaining perfection, still I have happily succeeded in so far confounding all distinctions of things and persons, of time and of places, that I could not assign the era of any

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* A paper which arose on the suggestion of the *History of Charlemagne*, by G. P. R. James, Esq. London: Longman and Co. 1832.

† "*A celebrated living professor*:" living when this was written.

one transaction, as I humbly trust, within a thousand years. The whole vast series of history is become a wilderness to me; and my mind, as to all such absurd knowledge, under the blessing of Heaven, is pretty nearly a *tabula rasa*." I was present at this *étalage* of ignorance, as perhaps I may already have informed the reader. And the case reminded me of one popularly ascribed to Orator Henley, who, in disputing with some careless fellow in a coffee-house, suddenly arrested his noisy antagonist by telling him that in one short sentence he had perpetrated two enormous mythologic blunders, having interchangeably confounded *Plutus*, the blind god of wealth, with *Pluto*, the gloomy tyrant of the infernal realms. "Confound them, have I?" said the mythologic criminal. "Well, so much the better; confound them both for two old rogues." "But," said Henley, "you have done them both unspeakable wrong." "With all my heart," rejoined the other, "they are heartily welcome to everything unspeakable below the moon: thank God, I know very little of such ruffians." "But how?" said Henley; "do I understand you to mean that you thank God for your ignorance?" "Well, suppose I *do*," said the respondent, "what have *you* to do with that?" "Oh, nothing," cried Henley; "only I should say that in that case, you had a great deal to be thankful for." I was young at that time, little more than a boy, and thirstily I sighed to repeat this little story as applicable to the present case. In fact it was too applicable; and in case Sir Anthony should be of the same opinion, I remembered seasonably that the finished and accomplished surgeon carries a pocket case of surgical implements; lancets, for instance, that are loaded with *virus* in every stage of contagion. Might he not inoculate me with *rabies*, with *hydrophobia*, with the plague of Cairo? On the whole, it seemed better to make play

against Sir Anthony with a sudden coruscation of forked logic; which accordingly I did, insisting upon it that as the true point of ambition was now changed for the philosophic student [the maximum of ignorance being the goal aimed at, and no longer the maximum of light], it had become outrageously vain-glorious in Sir Anthony to rehearse the steps of his own darkness; that we, the chance-people in Mrs. Montague's drawing-room, were young beginners, novices that had no advantages to give us a chance in such a contest with central darkness in the persons of veteran masters. Mrs. Montague took *my* side, and said that I, for instance, myself did very well, considering how short had been my career as regarded practice; but it was really unfair to look for perfection in a mere beginner. In this Gothic expression of self-congratulation upon the extent of his own ignorance, though doubtless founded upon what the Germans call an *einseitig** or one-sided estimate, there was however that sort of truth which is apprehended only by strong minds, such minds as naturally adhere to extreme courses. Certainly the blank knowledge of facts, which is all that most readers gather from their historical studies, is a mere deposition of rubbish without cohesion, and resting upon no basis of theory (that is, of general comprehensive survey) applied to the political development of nations, and accounting for the great stages of their internal movements. Rightly and profitably to understand history, it ought to be studied in as many ways as it may be written. History, as a composition, falls into three separate arrangements, obeying three distinct laws, and addressing itself to three distinct objects. Its first and humblest office is to

* Mark, reader, the progress of language, and consequently of novel ideas. This was written nearly thirty years ago, and at that time the term needed an apologetic formula.

deliver a naked unadorned exposition of public events and their circumstances. This form of history may be styled the purely Narrative; the second form is that which may be styled the Scenical; and the third the Philosophic. What is meant by Philosophic History is well understood in our present advanced state of society; and few histories are written except in the simplest condition of human culture, which do not in part assume its functions, or which are content to rest their entire attraction upon the abstract interest of facts. The privileges of this form have, however, been greatly abused; and the truth of facts has been so much forced to bend before preconceived theories, whereas every valid theory ought to be abstracted from the facts, that Mr. Southey and others in this day have set themselves to decry the whole genus and class, as essentially at war with the very primary purposes of the art. But, under whatever name, it is evident that philosophy, or an investigation of the true moving forces in every great train and sequence of national events, and an exhibition of the motives and the moral consequences in their largest extent which have concurred with these events, cannot be omitted in any history above the level of a childish understanding. Mr. Southey himself will be found to illustrate this necessity by his practice, whilst assailing it in principle. As to the other mode of history, history treated scenically, it is upon the whole the most delightful to the reader, and the most susceptible of art and ornament in the hands of a skilful composer. The most celebrated specimen in the vulgar opinion is the *Decline and Fall* of Gibbon. And to this class may in part* be referred the Historical Sketches of

* *In part* we say, because in part also the characteristic differences of these works depend upon the particular mode of the narrative. For

Voltaire. Histories of this class proceed upon principles of selection, presupposing in the reader a general knowledge of the great cardinal incidents, and bringing forward into especial notice those only which are susceptible of being treated with distinguished effect.

These are the three separate modes of treating history; each has its distinct purposes; and all must contribute to make up a comprehensive total of historical knowledge. The first furnishes the facts; the second opens a thousand opportunities for pictures of manners and national temper in every stage of their growth; whilst the third abstracts the political or the ethical moral, and unfolds the philosophy which knits the history of one nation to that of others, and exhibits the whole under their internal connexion, as parts of one great process, carrying on the great economy of human improvement by many stages in many regions at one and the same time.

Pursued upon this comprehensive scale, the study of history is the study of human nature. But some have continued to reject it, not upon any objection to the quality of the knowledge gained, but simply on the ground of its

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narration itself, as applied to history, admits of a triple arrangement, dogmatic, sceptical, and critical; dogmatic, which adopts the current records without examination; sceptical, as Horace Walpole's *Richard III.*, Malcolm Laing's *Dissertation on Perkin Warbeck*, or on the Gowrie Conspiracy, which expressly undertakes to probe and try the unsound parts of the story; and critical, which, after an examination of this nature, selects from the whole body of materials such as are coherent. There is besides another ground of difference in the quality of historical narratives, viz., between those which move by means of great public events, and those which (like the Cæsars of Suetonius and the French Memoirs), postulating all such capital events as are necessarily already known, and keeping them in the background, crowd their foreground with those personal and domestic notices which we call anecdotes.

limited extent; contending that in public and political transactions, such as compose the matter of history, human nature exhibits itself upon too narrow a scale and under too monotonous an aspect; that under different names, and in connexion with different dates and regions, events virtually the same are continually revolving; that whatever novelty may strike the ear, in passages of history taken from periods widely remote, affects the names only, and circumstances that are extra-essential; that the passions meantime, the motives, and (allowing for difference of manners) the means even, are subject to no variety; that in ancient or in modern history there is no real accession made to our knowledge of human nature; but that all proceeds by cycles of endless repetition; and in fact that, according to the old complaint, "there is nothing new under the sun."

It is not true that "there is nothing new under the sun." This is the complaint, as all men know, of a jaded voluptuary, seeking for a new pleasure and finding none, for reasons which lay in his own vitiated nature. Why did he seek for novelty? Because old pleasures had ceased to stimulate his exhausted organs; and that was reason enough why no new pleasure, had any been found, would operate as such for *him*. The weariness of spirit and the poverty of pleasure, which he bemoaned as belonging to our human condition, were not in reality *objective* (as a German philosopher would express himself), or laid in the nature of things, and thus pressing upon all alike, but *subjective*, that is to say, derived from the peculiar state and affections of his own organs for apprehending pleasure. Not the τὸ *apprehensibile*, but the τὸ *apprehendens*, was in fault; not the pleasures, or the dewy freshness of pleasures had decayed, but the sensibilities of him who thus undertook to appraise them were *blasés* and exhausted.

More truly and more philosophically, it may be said that there is nothing old under the sun, no absolute repetition. It is the well-known doctrine of Leibnitz,* that amongst the familiar objects of our daily experience, there is no perfect identity. All in external nature proceeds by endless variety. Infinite change, illimitable novelty, inexhaustible difference, these are the foundations upon which nature builds and ratifies her purpose of *individuality;* so indispensable, amongst a thousand other great uses, to the very elements of social distinctions and social rights. But for the endless circumstances of difference which characterize external objects, the rights of property, for instance, would have stood upon no certain basis, nor admitted of any general or comprehensive guarantee.

As with external objects, so with human actions: amidst their infinite approximations and affinities, they are separated by circumstances of never-ending diversity. History may furnish her striking correspondences, biography her splendid parallels; Rome may in certain cases appear but the mirror of Athens, England of Rome; and yet, after all, no character can be cited, no great transaction, no revolution of "high-viced cities," no catastrophe of nations, which, in the midst of its resemblances to distant correspondences in other ages, does not include features of abundant distinction

* Leibnitz (who was *twice* in England), when walking in Kensington Gardens with the Princess of Wales, whose admiration oscillated between this great countryman of her own and Sir Isaac Newton, the corresponding idol of her adopted country, took occasion, from the beautiful scene about them, to explain in a lively way and at the same time to illustrate and verify this favourite thesis: Turning to a gentleman in attendance upon her Royal Highness, he challenged him to produce two leaves from any tree or shrub, which should be exact duplicates or fac-similes of each other in those lines which variegate the surface. The challenge was accepted; but the result

and individualizing characteristics, so many and so important, as to yield its own peculiar matter for philosophical meditation and its own separate moral. Rare is the case in history, or (to speak with suitable boldness) there is none, which does not involve circumstances capable to a learned eye, without any external aid from chronology, of referring it to its own age. The doctrine of Leibnitz, on the grounds of individuality in the objects of sense, may, in fact, be profitably extended to all the great political actions of mankind. Many pass, in a popular sense, for pure transcripts or duplicates of similar cases in past times; but, accurately speaking, none are such truly and substantially. Neither are the differences by which they are severally marked and featured interesting only to the curiosity or to the spirit of minute research. All public acts, in the degree in which they are great and comprehensive, are steeped in living feelings and saturated with the spirit of their own age; and the features of their individuality, that is, the circumstances which chiefly distinguish them from their nearest parallels in other times, and chiefly prevent them from lapsing into blank repetitions of the same identical case, are generally the very cardinal points, the organs, and the depositories which lodge whatever best expresses the temper and tendencies of the age to which they belong.

justified Leibnitz. It is in fact upon this infinite variety in the superficial lines of the human palm, that palmistry is grounded (or the science of divination by the hieroglyphics written on each man's hand), and has its *primâ facie* justification. Were it otherwise, this mode of divination would not have even a *plausible* sanction; for, without the inexhaustible varieties which are actually found in the combination of these lines, and which give to each separate individual his own separate type, the same identical fortunes must be often repeated; and there would be no foundation for assigning to each his peculiar and characteristic destiny.

So far are these special points of distinction from being slight or trivial, that in them *par excellence* is gathered and concentrated whatever a political philosopher would be best pleased to insulate and to converge within his field of view.

This indeed is evident upon consideration; and is in some sense implied in the very verbal enunciation of the proposition: *vi termini*, it should strike every man who reflects, that in great national transactions of different ages, so far resembling each other as to merit the description of *parallels*, all the circumstances of agreement, all those which compose the resemblance, for the very reason that they are *common* to both periods of time, specially and characteristically belong to neither. It is the differential, and not the common, the points of special dissimilitude, not those of general similitude, which manifestly must be looked to for the philosophic valuation of the times or the people, for the adjudication of their peculiar claims in a comparison with other times and other people, and for the appraisement of the progress made, whether positively for its total amount, or relatively to itself, for its rate of advance at each separate stage.

It is in this way of critical examination, that comparison and the collation of apparent parallels, from being a pure amusement of ingenuity, rises to a philosophic labour, and that the study of history becomes at once dignified, and in a most practical sense profitable. It is the opinion of the subtlest and the most combining (if not the most useful) philosopher whom England has produced, that a true knowledge of history confers the gift of prophecy; or that intelligently and sagaciously to have looked backwards, is potentially to have looked forwards. For example, he is of opinion that any student of the great English civil war in

the reign of Charles I., who should duly have noted the signs precurrent and concurrent of those days, and should also have read the contemporary political pamphlets, coming thus prepared, could not have failed, after a corresponding study of the French literature from 1750 to 1788, and, in particular, after collecting the general sense and temper of the French people from the *Cahiers* (or codes of instruction transmitted by the electoral bodies to the members of the first National Assembly), to foresee in clear succession the long career of revolutionary frenzy, which soon afterwards deluged Europe with tears and blood. This may perhaps be conceded, and without prejudice to the doctrine just now delivered, of endless diversity in political events. For it is certain that the political movements of nations obey everlasting laws, and travel through the stages of known cycles, which thus insure enough of resemblance to guarantee the general outline of a sagacious prophecy; whilst, on the other hand, the times, the people, and the extraordinary minds which, in such critical eras, soon reveal themselves at the head of affairs, never fail of producing their appropriate and characteristic results of difference. Sameness enough there will always be to encourage the true political seer, with difference enough to confer upon each revolution its own separate character and its peculiar interest.

All this is strikingly illustrated in the history of those great revolutionary events which belong to the life and times of the Emperor Charlemagne. If any one period in history might be supposed to offer a barren and unprofitable picture of war, rapine, and bloodshed, unfeatured by characteristic differences, and unimproved by any peculiar moral, it is this section of the European annals. Removed from our present times by a thousand years, divided from us by the profound gulf of what we usually denominate the

dark ages; placed, in fact, entirely upon the farther* side of that great barrier, this period of history can hardly be expected to receive much light from contemporary documents in an age so generally illiterate. Not from national archives, or state papers, when diplomacy was so rare, when so large a proportion of its simple transactions was conducted by personal intercourse, and after the destruction wrought amongst its slender chancery of written memorials by the revolution of one entire millennium. Still less could we have reason to hope for much light from private memoirs at a period when the means of writing were as slenderly diffused as the motives; when the rare endowments, natural and acquired, for composing history could so seldom happen to coincide with the opportunities for obtaining accurate information; when the writers were so few, and the audience so limited, to which any writers soever could then profitably address themselves. With or without illustration, however, the age itself and its rapid succession of wars between barbarous and semi-barbarous tribes, might, if any one chapter in history, be presumed barren of either interest or instruction, wearisomely monotonous; and, by comparison with any parallel section from the records of other nations in the earliest stages of dawning civilisation, offering no one feature of novelty beyond the names of the combatants, their local and chronological relations, and the peculiar accidents and unimportant circumstances of variety in the conduct or issue of the several battles which they fought.

Yet, in contradiction to all these very plausible presump-

* According to the general estimate of philosophical history, the *tenth* century (or perhaps the tenth and the eleventh conjointly) must be regarded as the true meridian, or the perfect midnight, of the dark ages.

tions, even this remote period teems with its own peculiar and separate instruction. It is the first great station, so to speak, which we reach after entering the portals of modern* history. It presents us with the evolution and propagation of Christianity in its present central abodes; with the great march of civilisation, and the gathering within the pale of that mighty agency for elevating human nature, and beneath the gentle yoke of the only true and beneficent religion, of the last rebellious recusants among the European family of nations. We meet also, in conjunction with the other steps of the vast humanizing process then going on, the earliest efforts at legislation, recording, at the same time, the barbarous condition of those for whom they were designed, and the anti-barbarous views, alien or *exotic*, of the legislator, in the midst of his condescensions to the infirmities of his subjects. Here also we meet with the elementary state, growing and as yet imperfectly rooted, of feudalism. Here, too, we behold in their incunabula, forming and arranging themselves under the pressure of circumstances, the existing kingdoms of Christendom. So far then from being a mere echo, or repetition, of analogous passages in history, the

* It has repeatedly been made a question, at what era we ought to date the transition from ancient to modern history. This question merits a separate dissertation. Meantime it is sufficient to say in this place, that Justinian in the sixth century will unanimously be referred to the ancient division, Charlemagne in the eighth to the modern. These, then, are two limits fixed in each direction; and somewhere between them must lie the frontier line. Now the era of Mahomet in the seventh century is evidently the exact and perfect line of demarcation; not only as pretty nearly bisecting the debateable ground, but also because the rise of the Mohammedan power, as operating so powerfully upon the Christian kingdoms of the south, and through them upon the whole of Christendom, at that time beginning to mould themselves and to knit, marks in the most eminent sense the birth of a new era.

period of Charlemagne is novel to the extent of ambitious originality in its instruction, and almost unique in the quality of that instruction. For here only perhaps we see the social system forming itself in the mine, and the very process, as it were, of crystallization going on beneath our eyes. Mr. James, therefore, may be regarded as not less fortunate in the choice of his subject, than meritorious in its treatment; indeed, his work is not so much the best, as the only history of Charlemagne which will hereafter be cited. For it reposes upon a far greater body of research and collation, than has hitherto been applied* even in France to this interesting theme; and in effect it is the first account of the great emperor and his times which can, with a due valuation of the term, be complimented with the title of a *critical* memoir.

Charlemagne, "the greatest man of the middle ages," in the judgment of his present biographer, was born A.D. 742, seven years before his father assumed the *name* of king. This date has been disputed; but, on the whole, we may take it as settled, upon various collateral computations, that the year now assigned is the true one. The place is less certain; but we do not think Mr. James warranted in saying that it is "unknown." If everything is to be pronounced "unknown," for which there is no absolute proof of a kind to satisfy forensic rules of evidence, or which has ever been made a question for debate, in that case we may apply a sponge to the greater part of history before the era of printing. Aix-la-Chapelle, Mr. James goes on to tell us,

* Or, in fact, than is likely to manifest itself to an unlearned reader of Mr. James's own book; for he has omitted to load his margin with references to authorities in many scores of instances where he might, and perhaps when he ought, to have accredited his narrative by those indications of research.

is *implied* as the birthplace in one of the chief authorities. But our own impression is, that according to the general belief of succeeding ages, it was not Aix-la-Chapelle, but Ingelheim, a village near Mentz, to which that honour belonged. Some have supposed that Carlsburg, in Bavaria, was the true place of his birth; and, indeed, that it drew its name from that distinguished event. Frantzius, in particular, says, that in his day the castle of that place was still shown to travellers with the reverential interest attached to such a pretension. But, after all, he gives his own vote for Ingelheim; and it is singular that he does not so much as mention Aix-la-Chapelle. Of his education and his early years, Mr. James is of opinion that we know as little as of his birthplace. Certainly our information upon these particulars is neither full nor circumstantial; yet we know as much, perhaps, in these respects, of Charlemagne as of Napoleon Bonaparte. And remarkable enough it is, that not relatively (or making allowances for the age), but absolutely, Charlemagne was much more accomplished than Napoleon in the ordinary business of a *modern* education; Charlemagne, in the middle of the eighth century, than Napoleon in the latter end of the eighteenth. Charlemagne was, in fact, the most accomplished man of his age; Napoleon a sciolist for any age. The tutor of Charlemagne was Peter of Pisa, a man eminent at that time for his attainments in literature (*in re grammaticâ*). From him it was that Charlemagne learned Latin and Greek; Greek in such a degree "ut sufficienter intelligeret," and Latin to the extent of using it familiarly and fluently in conversation. Now, as to the man of the eighteenth century, Greek was to him as much a sealed language as Chinese; and, even with regard to Latin, his own secretary doubts upon one occasion, whether he were sufficiently master of it to trans-

late Juvenal's expressive words of *Panem et Circenses*. Yet he had enjoyed the benefits of an education in a royal college, in a country which regards itself self-complacently as at the head of civilisation. Again, there is a pretty strong tradition (which could hardly arise but upon some foundation), that Charlemagne had cultivated the Arabic so far as to talk it,* having no motive to that attainment more urgent than that political considerations made it eligible for him to undertake an expedition against those who could negotiate in no other language. Now, let it be considered how very much more powerful arguments there were in Napoleon's position for mastering the German and the English. His continental policy moved entirely upon the pivot of central Europe, that is, the German system of nations, the great federation of powers upon the Rhine and the Danube. And, as to England, his policy and his passions alike pointed in that direction as uniformly and as inevitably as the needle to the pole: every morning, we are told, tossing aside the Paris journals as so many babbling echoes of his own public illusions, expressing rather what was desired, than what was probable, he required of his secretary that he should read off into French the leading newspapers of England. And many were the times when he started up in fury, and passionately taxed his interpreter with mistranslation; sometimes as softening the expressions, sometimes as over-colouring their violence. Evidently he lay at the mercy of one whom he knew to be

* "Arabice loquutum esse Aigolando Saracenorum regulo, Turpinus (the famous Archbishop) auctor est; nec id fide indignum. Dum enim in expeditione Hispanicâ præcipuam belli molem in illum vertit, facile temporis tractu notitiam linguæ sibi comparare potuit." —FRANTZ. *Hist. Car. Mag.* That is, he had time sufficient for this acquisition, and a motive sufficient.

wanting in honour, and who had it in his power, either by way of abetting any sinister views of his own, or in collusion with others, to suppress, to add, to garble, and in every possible way to colour and distort what he was interpreting. Yet neither could this humiliating sense of dependency on the one hand, nor the instant pressure of political interest on the other, ever urge Napoleon to the effort of learning English in the first case, German or Spanish in the second. Charlemagne again cultivated most strenuously and successfully, as an accomplishment peculiarly belonging to the functions of his high station, the art and practice of eloquence; and he had this reward of his exertions--that he was accounted the most eloquent man of his age · "totis viribus ad orationem exercendam conversus naturalem facundiam ita roboravit studio, ut præter [l. *propter*] promptum ac profluens sermonis genus *facile ævi sui eloquentissimus crederetur*." Turn to Bonaparte. It was a saying of his sycophants, that he sometimes spoke like a god, and sometimes worse than the feeblest of mortals. But, says one who knew him well,--the mortal I have often heard, unfortunately never yet the god. He, who sent down this sneer to posterity, was at Napoleon's right hand on the most memorable occasion of his whole career—that cardinal occasion, as we may aptly term it (for upon *that* his whole fortunes hinged), when he intruded violently upon the Legislative Body, dissolved the Directory, and effected the revolution of the eighteenth Brumaire. That revolution it was which raised him to the Consular power; and by that revolution, considered in its manner and style, we may judge of Napoleon in several of his chief pretensions—courage, presence of mind, dignity, and eloquence; for then, if ever, these qualities were all in instant requisition; one word effectually urged by the antagonist parties, a breath, a

gesture, a nod, suitably followed up, would have made the total difference between ruler of France and a traitor hurried away *à la lanterne.* It is true, that the miserable imbecility of all who should have led the hostile parties, the irresolution and the quiet-loving temper of Moreau, the base timidity of Bernadotte, in fact, the total defect of heroic minds amongst the French of that day, neutralized the defects and more than compensated the blunders of Napoleon. But these were advantages that could not be depended on: a glass of brandy extraordinary might have emboldened the greatest poltroon to do that which, by once rousing a movement of popular enthusiasm, once making a beginning in that direction, would have precipitated the whole affair into hands which must have carried it far beyond the power of any party to control. Never, according to all human calculation, were eloquence and presence of mind so requisite: never was either so deplorably wanting. A passionate exposition of the national degradations inflicted by the imbecility of the Directors, an appeal to the assembly as Frenchmen, contrasting the glories of 1796 with the Italian disasters that had followed, might, by connecting the new candidate for power with the public glory, and the existing rulers with all the dishonours which had settled on the French banners, have given an electric shock to the patriotism of the audience, such as would have been capable for the moment of absorbing their feelings as partisans. In a French assembly, movements of that nature, under a momentary impulse, are far from being uncommon. Here then, if never before, here, if never again, the grandeur of the occasion demanded—almost, we might say, implored, and clamorously invoked, the effectual powers of eloquence and perfect self-possession. How was the occasion met? Let us turn to the actual scene, as painted in lively colours by

a friend and an eye-witness:*—"The accounts brought every instant to Général Bonaparte determined him to enter the hall [of the Ancients] and take part in the debate. His entrance was hasty, and in anger; no favourable prognostics of what he would say. The passage by which we entered led directly forward into the middle of the house; our backs were towards the door; Bonaparte had the President on his right; he could not see him quite in front. I found myself on the General's right; our clothes touched: Berthier was on his left. All the harangues composed for Bonaparte after the event differ from each other: no miracle that. There was, in fact, none pronounced to the Ancients; unless a broken conversation with the President, carried on without nobleness, propriety, or dignity, may be called a speech. We heard only these words—'*Brothers in arms*

* Not having the French original of Bourrienne's work, we are compelled to quote from the current translation, which, however, is everywhere incorrect, and in a degree absolutely astonishing; and, where not incorrect, offensive from vulgarisms or ludicrous expression. Thus, it translates *un drole*, a droll fellow, wide as the poles from the true meaning; *ce drole-là* means *that scoundrel.* Again, the verb *devoir*, in all tenses (that eternal stumbling-block to bad French scholars), is uniformly mistranslated. As an instance of ignoble language, at p. 234, vol. i., he says, "Josephine was delighted with the disposition of her *goodman*," a word used only by underbred people. But of all the absurdities which disfigure the work, what follows is perhaps the most striking:—"Kleber," he says, "took a *precognition* of the army," p. 231, vol. i. A precognition! What Pagan ceremony may that be? Know, reader, that this monster of a word is a technical term of Scotch law; and even to the Scotch, excepting those few who know a little of law, absolutely unintelligible. In speaking thus harshly, we are far from meaning anything unkind to the individual translator, whom, on the contrary, for his honourable sentiments in relation to the merits of Bonaparte, we greatly respect. But that has nothing to do with French translation—the condition of which, in this country, is perfectly scandalous.

—*frankness of a soldier.*' The interrogatories of the President were clear. Nothing could be more confused or worse enounced than the ambiguous and disjointed replies of Bonaparte. He spoke incoherently of volcanoes—secret agitations—victories—constitution violated. He found fault even with the 18th Fructidor, of which he had himself been the prime instigator and most powerful upholder." [Not, reader, observe, from bold time-serving neglect of his own principles, but from absolute distraction of mind, and incoherency of purpose.] "Then came *Cæsar—Cromwell—Tyrant*"—[allusions which, of all others, were the most unseasonable for that crisis, and for his position.] "He repeated several times —*I have no more than that to tell you;* and he had told them nothing. Then out came the words,—*Liberty, Equality:* for these every one saw he had not come to St. Cloud. Then his action became animated, and we lost him—comprehending nothing beyond *18th Fructidor, 30th Prairial, hypocrites, intriguers; I am not so; I shall declare all; I will abdicate the power when the danger which threatens the Republic has passed.*" Then, after further instances of Napoleon's falsehood, and the self-contradictory movements of his disjointed babble, the secretary goes on thus: "These interruptions, apostrophes, and interrogations, overwhelmed him; he believed himself lost. The disapprobation became more violent, and his discourse still more wanting in method and coherence. Sometimes he addressed the representatives quite stultified; sometimes the military in the court [*i.e.*, outside], who were beyond hearing; then, without any transition, he spoke of the thunder of war, saying, *I am accompanied by the god of war and fortune.* The President then calmly observed to him, that he found nothing, absolutely nothing, upon which they could deliberate, that all he had said was

vague. *Explain yourself, unfold the plots into which you have been invited to enter.* Bonaparte repeated the same things; and in what style! No idea in truth can be formed of the whole scene, unless by those present. There was not the least order in all he stammered out (to speak sincerely) with the most inconceivable incoherence. Bonaparte was no orator. Perceiving the bad effect produced upon the meeting by this rhapsody, and the progressive confusion of the speaker, I whispered (pulling his coat gently at the same time)—'Retire, General; you no longer know what you are saying.' I made a sign to Berthier to second me in persuading him to leave the place; when suddenly, after stammering out a few words more, he turned round, saying, 'Let all who love me follow.'" So ended this famous scene—in which, more than in any other upon record, eloquence and presence of mind were needful. And if it should be said that vagueness was not altogether the least eligible feature in a speech whose very purpose was to confuse, and to leave no room for answer, we reply—true; but then it was the vagueness of art, which promised to be serviceable, and that of preconcerted perplexity, not the vagueness of incoherence and a rhapsody of utter contradiction.*

* Some people may fancy that this scene of that day's drama was got up merely to save appearances by a semblance of discussion, and that in effect it mattered not how the performance was conducted where all was scenical, and the ultimate reliance, after all, on the bayonet. But it is certain that this view is erroneous, and that the final decision of the soldiery, even up to the very moment of the crisis, was still doubtful. Some time after this exhibition, "the hesitation reigning among the troops," says Bourrienne, "still continued." And in reality it was a mere accident of pantomime, and a clap-trap of sentiment, which finally gave a sudden turn in Napoleon's favour to their wavering resolutions.

What a contrast all this to the indefeasible majesty of Charlemagne; to his courage and presence of mind, which always rose with the occasion; and, above all, to his promptitude of winning eloquence, that *promptum ac profluens genus sermonis*, which caused him to be accounted *ævi sui eloquentissimus*!

Passing for a moment to minor accomplishments, we find that Charlemagne excelled in athletic and gymnastic exercises; he was a *pancratiast*. Bonaparte wanted those even which were essential to his own daily security. Charlemagne swam well; Bonaparte not at all. Charlemagne was a first-rate horseman even amongst the Franks; Napoleon rode ill originally, and no practice availed to give him a firm seat, a graceful equestrian deportment, or a skilful bridle hand. In a barbarous age the one possessed all the elegancies and ornamental accomplishments of a gentleman: the other, in a most polished age, and in a nation of even false refinement, was the sole barbarian of his time; presenting in his deficiencies the picture of a low mechanic, and in his positive qualities the violence and brutality of a savage.* Hence, by the way, the extreme folly of those who have attempted to trace a parallel between Napoleon

* We have occasionally such expressions as Dryden's—"When wild in woods *the noble savage* ran." These descriptions rest upon false conceptions; in fact, no such combination anywhere exists as a man having the training of a savage, or occupying the exposed and naked situation of a savage, who is at the same time in any moral sense at liberty to be noble minded. Men are moulded by the circumstances in which they stand habitually; and the insecurity of savage life, by making it impossible to forego any sort of advantages, obliterates the very idea of honour. Hence, with all savages alike, the point of honour lies in treachery, in stratagem, and the utmost excess of what is dishonourable, according to the estimate of cultivated man.

and the first Cæsar. The heaven-born Julius, as beyond all dispute the greatest man of ancient history in moral grandeur, and therefore raised unspeakably above comparison with one who was eminent, even amongst ordinary men, for the pettiness of his passions, so also, upon an intellectual trial, will be found to challenge pretty nearly an equal precedency. Meantime, allowing for the inequality of their advantages, even Cæsar would not have disdained a comparison with Charlemagne. All the knowledge current in Rome, Athens, or Rhodes, at the period of Cæsar's youth, the entire cycle of a nobleman's education in a republic where all noblemen were from their birth dedicated to public services, this—together with much and various knowledge peculiar to himself and his own separate objects—had Cæsar mastered; whilst, in an age of science, and in a country where the fundamental science of mathematics was generally diffused in unrivalled perfection, it is well ascertained that Bonaparte's knowledge did not go beyond an elementary acquaintance with the first six books of Euclid; but, on the other hand, Charlemagne, even in that early age, was familiar with the intricate mathematics and the elaborate *computus* of Practical Astronomy.

But these collations, it will be said, are upon questions not primarily affecting their peculiar functions. They are questions more or less extrajudicial. The true point of comparison is upon the talents of policy in the first place, and strategics in the second. A trial between two celebrated performers in these departments, is at any rate difficult, and much more so when they are separated by vast intervals of time. Allowances must be made, so many and so various; compensations or balances struck upon so many diversities of situation; there is so much difference in the modes of warfare—offensive and defensive; the financial

means, the available alliances, and other resources, are with so much difficulty appraised—in order to raise ourselves to that station from which the whole question can be overlooked, that nothing short of a general acquaintance with the history, statistics, and diplomacy of the two periods, can lay a ground for the solid adjudication of so large a comparison. Meantime, in the absence of such an investigation, pursued upon a scale of suitable proportions, what if we should sketch a rapid outline (ὡς ἐν τυπῳ περιλάβειν) of its *elements* (to speak by a metaphor borrowed from practical astronomy)—*i.e.*, of the principal and most conspicuous points which its path would traverse? How much these two men, each central to a mighty system in his own days, how largely and essentially they differed, whether in kind or in degree of merit, will appear in the course even of the hastiest sketch. The circumstances in which they agreed, and that these were sufficient to challenge an inquiry into their characteristic differences, and to support the interest of such an inquiry, will probably be familiar to most readers, as among the commonplaces of general history which survive even in the daily records of conversation. Few people can fail to know—that each of these memorable men stood at the head of a new era in European history, and of a great movement in the social development of nations; that each laid the foundations for a new dynasty in his own family, the one by building forwards upon a basis already formed by his two immediate progenitors, the other by dexterously applying to a great political crisis his own military preponderance; and, finally, that each forfeited within a very brief period—the one in his own person, the other in the persons of his immediate descendants—the giddy ascent which he had mastered, and all the distinctions which it conferred; in short, that

"Time, which gave, did his own gifts confound;"* but with this mighty difference—that Time co-operated in the one case with extravagant folly in the individual, and in the other with the irresistible decrees of Providence.

Napoleon Bonaparte and Charlemagne were both, in a memorable degree, the favourites of fortune. It is true, that the latter found himself by inheritance in possession of a throne, which the other ascended by the fortunate use of his own military advantages. But the throne of Charlemagne had been recently won by his family, and in a way so nearly corresponding to that which was afterwards pursued by Napoleon, that in effect, considering how little this usurpation had been hallowed by time, the throne might in each case, if not won precisely on the same terms, be considered to be held by the same tenure. Charlemagne, not less than Napoleon, was the privileged child of revolution; he was required by the times, and indispensable to the crisis which had arisen for the Franks; and he was himself protected by the necessities to which he ministered. Clouds had risen, or were rising, at that era, on every quarter of France; from every side she was menaced by hostile demonstrations; and without the counsels of a Charlemagne, and with an energy of action inferior to his, it is probable that she would have experienced misfortunes which, whilst they depressed herself, could not but have altered the destinies of Christendom for many ages to come. The resources of France, it is true, were immense; and, as regarded the positions of her enemies, they were admirably concentrated. But to be made available in the whole extent which the times demanded, it was essential that they should be wielded by a first-rate statesman, supported by a

* Shakspere's Sonnets.

first-rate soldier. The statesman and the soldier were fortunately found united in the person of one man; and that man, by the rarest of combinations, the same who was clothed with the supreme power of the state. Less power, or power less harmonious, or power the most consummate administered with less absolute skill, would doubtless have been found incompetent to struggle with the tempestuous assaults which then lowered over the entire frontier of France. It was natural, and, upon the known constitution of human nature, pretty nearly inevitable, that, in the course of the very extended warfare which followed, love for that glorious trade—so irritating and so contagious—should be largely developed in a mind as aspiring as Charlemagne's, and stirred by such generous sensibilities. Yet is it in no one instance recorded, that these sympathies with the pomp and circumstance of war, moved him to undertake so much as a single campaign, or an expedition which was not otherwise demanded by his judgment, or that they interfered even to bias or give an impulse to his judgment, where it had previously wavered. In every case he tried the force of negotiation before he appealed to arms; nay, sometimes he condescended so far in his love of peace, as to attempt purchasing with gold rights or concessions of expediency, which he knew himself in a situation amply to extort by arms. Nor, where these courses were unavailing, and where peace was no longer to be maintained by any sacrifices, is it ever found that Charlemagne, in adopting the course of war, suffered himself to pursue it as an end valuable in and for itself. And yet *that* is a result not uncommon; for a long and conscientious resistance to a measure originally tempting to the feelings, once being renounced as utterly unavailing, not seldom issues in a headlong surrender of the heart to purposes so violently

thwarted for a time. And even as a means, war was such in the eyes of Charlemagne to something beyond the customary ends of victory and domestic security. Of all conquerors, whose history is known sufficiently to throw light upon their motives, Charlemagne is the only one who looked forward to the benefit of those he conquered, as a principal element amongst the fruits of conquest. "Doubtless," says his present biographer, "to defend his own infringed territory, and to punish the aggressors, formed a part of his design; but, beyond that, he aimed at civilizing a people whose barbarism had been for centuries the curse of the neighbouring countries, and at the same time communicating to the cruel savages, who shed the blood of their enemies less in the battle than in the sacrifice, the bland and mitigating spirit of the Christian religion."

This applies more particularly and circumstantially to his Saxon campaigns; but the spirit of the remark is of general application. At that time a weak light of literature was beginning to diffuse improvement in Italy, in France, and in England. France, by situation geographically, and politically by the prodigious advantage (which she exclusively enjoyed) of an undivided government, with the benefit consequently of an entire unity in her counsels, was peculiarly fitted for communicating the blessings of intellectual culture to the rest of the European continent, and for sustaining the great mission of civilizing conquest. Above all, as the great central depository of Christian knowledge, she seemed specially stationed by Providence as a martial apostle for carrying by the sword that mighty blessing, which, even in an earthly sense, Charlemagne could not but value as the best engine of civilisation, to the potent infidel nations on her southern and eastern frontier. A vast revolution was at hand for Europe; all her tribes were destined to be

fused in a new crucible, to be recast in happier moulds, and to form one family of enlightened nations, to compose one great collective brotherhood, united by the tie of a common faith and a common hope, and hereafter to be known to the rest of the world, and to proclaim this unity, under the comprehensive name of *Christendom.* Baptism, therefore, was the indispensable condition and forerunner of civilisation ; and from the peculiar ferocity and the sanguinary superstitious which disfigured the Pagan nations in Central Europe, of which the leaders and the nearest to France were the Saxons, and from the bigotry and arrogant intolerance of the Mohammedan nations who menaced her Spanish frontier, it was evident that by the sword only it was possible that baptism should be effectually propagated. War, therefore, for the highest purposes of peace, became the present and instant policy of France ; bloodshed for the sake of a religion the most benign ; and desolation with a view to permanent security. The Frankish emperor was thus invited to indulge in this most captivating of luxuries —the royal tiger-hunt of war ; as being also at this time, and for a special purpose, the sternest of duties. He had a special dispensation for wielding at times a barbarian and exterminating sword, but for the extermination of barbarism ; and he was privileged to be in a single instance an Attila, in order that Attilas might no more arise. Simply as the enemies, bitter and perfidious of France, the Saxons were a legitimate object of war ; as the standing enemies of civilisation, who would neither receive it for themselves, nor tolerate its peaceable enjoyment in others, they and Charlemagne stood opposed to each other as it were by hostile instincts. And this most merciful of conquerors was fully justified in departing for once, and in such a quarrel, from his general rule of conduct ; and for a para-

mount purpose of comprehensive service to all mankind, we entirely agree with Mr. James, that Charlemagne had a sufficient plea, and that he has been censured only by calumnious libellers, or by the feeble-minded, for applying a Roman severity of punishment to treachery continually repeated. The question is one purely of policy; and it may be, as Mr. James is disposed to think, that in point of judgment the emperor erred; but certainly the case was one of great difficulty; for the very infirmity even of maternal indulgence, if obstinately and continually abused, must find its ultimate limit; and we have no right to suppose that Charlemagne made his election for the harsher course without a violent self-conflict. His former conduct towards those very people, his infinite forbearance, his long-suffering, his monitory threats, all make it a duty to presume that he suffered the acutest pangs in deciding upon a vindictive punishment; that he adopted this course as being virtually by its consequences the least sanguinary; and, finally, that if he erred, it was not through his heart, but by resisting its very strongest impulses.

It is remarkable that both Charlemagne and Bonaparte succeeded as by inheritance to one great element of their enormous power; each found, ready to his hands, that vast development of martial enthusiasm, upon which, as its first condition, their victorious career reposed. Each also found the great armory of resources opened, which such a spirit, diffused over so vast a territory, must in any age insure. Of Charlemagne, in an age when as yet the use of infantry was but imperfectly known, it may be said symbolically, that he found the universal people, patrician and plebeian, chieftain and vassal, with the left foot* in the stirrup; of

* Or perhaps the *right*, for the Prussian cavalry (who drew their custom from some regiments in the service of Gustavus Adolphus,

Napoleon, in an age when the use of artillery was first understood, that he found every man standing to his gun. Both in short found war *in procinctu;* both found the people whom they governed, willing to support the privations and sacrifices which war imposes; hungering and thirsting for its glories, its pomps and triumphs; entering even with lively sympathy of pleasure into its hardships and its trials; and thus, from within and from without, prepared for military purposes. So far both had the same good fortune;* neither had much merit. The enthusiasm of Napoleon's days was the birth of republican sentiments, and built on a reaction of civic and patriotic ardour. In the very plenitude of their rage against kings, the French Republic were threatened with attack, and with the desolation of their capital by a banded crusade of kings; and they rose in frenzy to meet the aggressors. The Allied Powers had themselves kindled the popular excitement

and they again traditionally from others) are always trained to mount in this way.

* It is painful to any man of honourable feeling that, whilst a great rival nation is pursuing the ennobling profession of arms, his own should be reproached contemptuously with a sordid dedication to commerce. However, on the one hand, things are not always as they seem; commerce has its ennobling effects, direct or indirect; war its barbarizing degradations. And, on the other hand, the facts even are not exactly as *prima facie* they were supposed; for the truth is, that, in proportion to its total population, England had more men in arms during the last war than France. But, generally speaking, the case may be stated thus: the British nation is, by original constitution of mind, and by long enjoyment of liberty, a far nobler people than the French. And hence we see the reason and the necessity that the French should, with a view to something like a final balance in the effect, be trained to a nobler profession. Compensations are everywhere produced or encouraged by nature and by providence; and a nobler discipline in the one nation is doubtless some equilibrium to a nobler nature in the other.

which provoked this vast development of martial power amongst the French, and first brought their own warlike strength within their own knowledge. In the days of Charlemagne the same martial character was the result of ancient habits and training, encouraged and effectually organized by the energy of the aspiring mayors of the palace, or great lieutenants of the Merovingian kings. But agreeing in this, that they were indebted to others for the martial spirit which they found, and that both turned to their account a power not created by themselves; Charlemagne and Napoleon differed, however, in the utmost possible extent as to the final application of their borrowed advantages. Napoleon applied them to purposes the very opposite of those which had originally given them birth. Nothing less than patriotic ardour in defence of what had at one time appeared to be the cause of civil liberty, could have availed to evoke those mighty hosts which gathered in the early years of the Revolution on the German and Italian frontiers of France. Yet were these hosts applied, under the perfect despotism of Napoleon, to the final extinction of liberty; and the armies of Jacobinism, who had gone forth on a mission of liberation for Europe, were at last employed in riveting the chains of their compatriots, and forging others for the greater part of Christendom. Far otherwise was the conduct of Charlemagne. The Frankish government, though we are not circumstantially acquainted with its forms, is known to have been tempered by a large infusion of popular influence. This is proved, as Mr. James observes, by the deposition of Chilperic; by the grand national assemblies of the Champ de Mars; and by other great historical facts. Now, the situation of Charlemagne, successor to a throne already firmly established, and in his own person a mighty amplifier of its glories, and a

leader in whom the Franks had unlimited confidence, threw into his hands an unexampled power of modifying the popular restraints upon himself in any degree he might desire.

"Nunquam libertas gratior exit,
Quam sub rege pio"—

is the general doctrine. But as to the Franks in particular, if they resembled their modern representatives in their most conspicuous moral feature, it would be more true to say, that the bribe and the almost magical seduction for *them*, capable of charming away their sternest resolutions, and of relaxing the hand of the patriot when grasping his noblest birthright, has ever lain in great military success, in the power of bringing victory to the national standards, and in continued offerings on the altar of public vanity. In *their* estimate for above a thousand years, it has been found true that the harvest of a few splendid campaigns, reaped upon the fields of neighbouring nations, far outweighs any amount of humbler blessings in the shape of civil and political privileges. Charlemagne as a conqueror, and by far the greatest illustrator of the Frankish name, might easily have conciliated their gratitude and admiration into a surrender of popular rights; or, profiting by his high situation, and the confidence reposed in him, he might have undermined their props; or, by a direct exertion of his power, he might have peremptorily resumed them. Slowly and surely, or summarily and with violence, this great emperor had the national privileges in his power. But the beneficence of his purposes required no such aggression on the rights of his subjects. War brought with it naturally some extension of power; and a military jurisdiction is necessarily armed with some discretionary license. But in the civil exercise of his authority, the emperor was content with the powers awarded to him by law and custom. His great

schemes of policy were all of a nature to prepare his subjects for a condition of larger political influence; he could not in consistency be adverse to an end towards which he so anxiously prepared the means. And it is certain that, although some German writers have attempted to fasten upon Charlemagne a charge of vexatious inquisition into the minor police of domestic life, and into petty details of economy below the majesty of his official character, even *their* vigilance of research, sharpened by malice, has been unable to detect, throughout his long reign, and in the hurry of sudden exigencies natural to a state of uninterrupted warfare and alarm, one single act of tyranny, personal revenge, or violation of the existing laws. Charlemagne, like Napoleon, had bitter enemies, some who were such to his government and his public purposes; some again to his person upon motives of private revenge. Tassilo, for example, the Duke of Bavaria, and Desiderius, the King of the Lombards, acted against him upon the bitterest instigations of feminine resentment; each of these princes conceiving himself concerned in a family quarrel, pursued the cause which he had adopted in the most ferocious spirit of revenge, and would undoubtedly have inflicted death upon Charlemagne, had he fallen into their power. Of this he must himself have been sensible; and yet, when the chance of war threw both of them into his power, he forbore to exercise even those rights of retaliation for their many provocations which the custom of that age sanctioned universally; he neither mutilated nor deprived them of sight. Confinement to religious seclusion was all that he inflicted; and in the case of Tassilo, where mercy could be more safely exercised, he pardoned him so often, that it became evident in what current his feelings ran, wherever the cruel necessities of the public service allowed him to indulge them.

In the conspiracy formed against him, upon the provocations offered to the Frankish nobility by his third wife, he showed the same spirit of excessive clemency, a clemency which again reminds us of the first Cæsar, and which was not merely parental, but often recalls to us the long-suffering and tenderness of spirit which belong to the infirmity of maternal affection. Here are no Palms, executed for no real offence known to the laws of his country, and without a trial such as any laws in any country would have conceded. No innocent D'Enghiens murdered, without the shadow of provocation, and purely on account of his own reversionary rights; not for doing or meditating wrong, but because the claims which unfortunately he inherited might by possibility become available in his person; not, therefore, even as an enemy by intention or premeditation; not even as an apparent competitor, but in the rare character of a competitor presumptive; one who might become an ideal competitor by the extinction of a whole family, and even then no substantial competitor until after a revolution in France, which must already have undermined the throne of Bonaparte. To his own subjects, and his own kinsmen, never did Charlemagne forget to be, in acts as well as words, a parent. In his foreign relations, it is true, for one single purpose of effectual warning, Charlemagne put forth a solitary trait of Roman harshness. This is the case which we have already noticed and defended; and, with a view to the comparison with Napoleon, remarkable enough it is, that the numbers sacrificed on this occasion are pretty nearly the same as on the celebrated massacre at Jaffa, perpetrated by Napoleon in Council.* In the Saxon, as in the

* "*In council,*" we say purposely and in candour; for the only pleas in palliation ever set up by Napoleon's apologists, are these two, *necessity,* the devil's plea, in the first place; secondly, that the guilt

Syrian massacre, the numbers were between four and five thousand; not that the numbers or the scale of the transaction can affect its principle, but it is well to know it, because then to its author, as now to us who sit as judges upon it, that circumstance cannot be supposed to have failed in drawing the very keenest attention to its previous consideration. A butchery, that was in a numerical sense so vast, cannot be supposed to have escaped its author in a hurry, or to be open to any of the usual palliations from precipitance or inattention. Charlemagne and Napoleon must equally be presumed to have regarded this act on all sides, to have weighed it in and for itself, and to have traversed by anticipation the whole sum of its consequences. In the one case we find a general, the leader of a *soi-disant* Christian army, the representative of the "most Christian" nation, and, as amongst infidels, specially charged with the duty of supporting the sanctity of Christian good faith, unfortunately pledged by his own most confidential and accredited agents, in a moment of weakness, to a promise which he the commander-in-chief regarded as ruinous. This promise, fatal to Napoleon's honour, and tarnishing for many a year to the Christian name, guaranteed "quarter" to a large body of Turkish troops, having arms in their hands, and otherwise well able to have made a desperate defence. Such a promise was peculiarly embarrassing; provisions ran short, and, to detain them as prisoners, would draw murmurs from his own troops, now suffering hardships themselves. On the other hand, to have turned them adrift would have insured their speedy reappearance as active enemies to a diminished and debilitated army; for, as to sending them

of the transaction, whether more or less, was divided amongst the general and the several members of his council.

off by sea, that measure was impracticable, as well from want of shipping as from the presence of the English. Such was the dilemma, doubtless perplexing enough, but not more so than in ten thousand other cases, for which their own appropriate ten thousand remedies have been found. What was the issue? The entire body of gallant soldiers, disarmed upon the faith of a solemn guarantee from a Christian general, standing in the very steps of the noble (and the more noble, because bigoted) Crusaders, were all mowed down by the musketry of their thrice accursed enemy; and, by way of crowning treachery with treachery, some few who had swum off to a point of rock in the sea, were lured back to destruction under a second series of promises, violated almost at the very instant when uttered. A larger or more damnable murder does not stain the memory of any brigand, buccaneer, or pirate; nor has any army, Huns, Vandals, or Mogul Tartars, ever polluted itself by so base a perfidy; for, in this memorable tragedy, the whole army were accomplices. Now, as to Charlemagne, he had tried the effect of forgiveness and lenity often in vain. Clemency was misinterpreted; it had been, and it would be, construed into conscious weakness. Under these circumstances, with a view undoubtedly to the final extinction of rebellions which involved infinite bloodshed on both sides, he permitted one trial to be made of a severe and sanguinary chastisement. It failed; insurrections proceeded as before, and it was not repeated. But the main difference in the principle of the two cases is this, that Charlemagne had exacted no penalty but one, which the laws of war in that age conferred, and even in this age the laws of allegiance. However bloody, therefore, this tragedy was no murder. It was a judicial punishment, built upon known acts and admitted laws, designed in mercy, consented to unwillingly, and finally repented.

Lastly, instead of being one in a multitude of acts bearing the same character, it stood alone in a long career of intercourse with wild and ferocious nations, owning no control but that of the spear and sword.

Many are the points of comparison, and some of them remarkable enough, in the other circumstances of the two careers, separated by a thousand years. Both effected the passage of the Great St. Bernard;* but the one in an age when mechanical forces, and the aids of art, were yet imperfectly developed; the other in an age when science had armed the arts of war and of locomotion with the fabulous powers of the Titans, and with the whole resources of a mighty nation at his immediate disposal. Both, by means of this extraordinary feat, achieved the virtual conquest of Lombardy in an hour; but Charlemagne, without once risking the original impression of this *coup-d'éclat;* Napoleon, on the other hand, so entirely squandering and forfeiting his own success, that in the battle which followed he was at first utterly defeated, and but for the blunder of his enemy, and the sudden aid of an accomplished friend, irretrievably. Both suffered politically by the repudiation of a wife; but Charlemagne, under adequate provocation, and with no final result of evil; Bonaparte under heavy aggravations of ingratitude and indiscretion. Each assumed the character of a patron to learning and learned men; but Napoleon, in an age when knowledge of every kind was self-patronized, when no possible exertions of power could avail to crush it, and yet, under these circumstances, with

* And from the fact of that corps in Charlemagne's army, which effected the passage, having been commanded by his uncle, Duke Bernard, this mountain, previously known as the *Mons* Jovis (and, by corruption, Mont le Joux), very justly obtained the more modern name which it still retains.

utter insincerity. Charlemagne, on the other hand, at a time when the countenance of a powerful protector made the whole difference between revival and a long extinction; and what was still more to the purpose of doing honour to his memory, not merely in a spirit of sincerity, but of fervid activity. Not content with drawing counsel and aid from the cells of Northumberland, even the short time which he passed at Rome, he had "collected a number of grammarians (that is, *littérateurs*) and arithmeticians, the poor remains of the orators and philosophers of the past, and engaged them to accompany him from Italy to France."

What resulted in each case from these great efforts and prodigious successes? Each failed in laying the foundations of any permanent inheritance to his own glory in his own family. But Bonaparte lived to lay in ruins even his personal interest in this great edifice of empire; and that entirely by his own desperate presumption, precipitance, and absolute defect of self-command. Charlemagne, on *his* part, lost nothing of what he had gained: if his posterity did not long maintain the elevation to which he had raised them, *that* did but the more proclaim the grandeur of the mind which had reared a colossal empire, that sank under any powers inferior to his own. If the empire itself lost its unity, and divided into sections, even thus it did not lose the splendour and prosperity of its separate parts; and the praise remains entire—let succeeding princes, as conservators, have failed as much and as excusably as they might—that he erected the following splendid empire:—The whole of France and Belgium, with their natural boundaries of the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Ocean, the Mediterranean; to the south, Spain between the Ebro and the Pyrenees; and to the north, the whole of Germany, up to the banks of the Elbe. Italy, as far as the lower Calabria, was either

governed by his son, or tributary to his crown ; Dalmatia, Croatia, Liburnia, and Istria (with the exception of the maritime cities), were joined to the territories, which he had himself conquered, of Hungary and Bohemia. As far as the conflux of the Danube with the Teyss and the Save, the east of Europe acknowledged his power. Most of the Sclavonian tribes, between the Elbe and the Vistula, paid tribute and professed obedience ; and Corsica, Sardinia, with the Balearic Islands, were dependent upon his possessions in Italy and Spain.

His moral were yet greater than his territorial conquests : in the eloquent language of his present historian, " he snatched from darkness all the lands he conquered ; and may be said to have added the whole of Germany to the world." Wherever he moved, civilisation followed his footsteps What he conquered was emphatically the conquest of his own genius ; and his vast empire was, in a peculiar sense, his own creation. And that which, under general circumstances, would have exposed the hollowness and insufficiency of his establishment, was for him, in particular, the seal and attestation of his extraordinary grandeur of mind. His empire dissolved after he had departed ; his dominions lost their cohesion, and slipped away from the nerveless hands which succeeded ; a sufficient evidence —were there no other—that all the vast resources of the Frankish throne, wielded by imbecile minds, were inadequate to maintain that which, in the hands of a Charlemagne, they had availed to conquer and cement.

GOETHE

AS REFLECTED IN HIS NOVEL OF WILHELM MEISTER.

[*Written in September* 1824.]

To be an eidoloclast is not a pleasant office, because an invidious one. Whenever that can be effected, therefore, it is prudent to devolve the odium of such an office upon the idol himself. Let the object of the false worship always, if possible, be made his own eidoloclast. As respects Wilhelm Meister, this *is* possible: and so far, therefore, as Goethe's pretensions are founded on that novel, Goethe shall be his own eidoloclast. For our own parts we shall do no more than suggest a few principles of judgment, and recall the hasty reader to his own more honourable thoughts, for the purpose of giving an occasional impulse and direction to his feelings on the passages we may happen to quote—which passages, the very passages of Goethe, will be their own sufficient review, and Mr. Goethe's best exposure. We need not waste time in deprecating unreasonable prepossessions: for, except amongst his clannish coterie of partisans in London (collectively not enough to fill the boudoir of a blue-stocking), there *are* no such prepossessions. Some, indeed, of that coterie have on occasion of our former article pushed their partisanship to the extent of forgetting the language of gentlemen. This at least has been reported to us. We are sorry for *them;* not angry on our own account, nor much surprised. They are to a certain degree excusably irritable, from the consciousness of being unsupported and

unsteadied by general sympathy. Sectarians are allowably ferocious. However, we shall reply only by recalling a little anecdote of John Henderson,* in the spirit of which we mean to act. Upon one occasion, when he was disputing at a dinner party, his opponent being pressed by some argument too strong for his logic or his temper, replied by throwing a glass of wine in his face: upon which Henderson, with the dignity of a scholar who felt too justly how much this boyish petulance had disgraced his antagonist to be in any danger of imitating it, coolly wiped his face, and said,—"This, sir, is a digression: now, if you please, for the argument."†

And now, if you please, for our argument. What shall that be? How shall we conduct it? As far as is possible, the translator of Wilhelm Meister would deny us the benefit of *any* argument: for thus plaintively he seeks to forestall us (Preface xii.), "Every man's judgment is, *in this free country*, a lamp to himself" (*Free* country! why, we hope there is no despotism so absolute, no not in Turkey, nor Algiers, where a man may not publish his opinion of Wilhelm Meister!): "and many, it is to be feared, will insist on

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* The two authorities for all authentic information about J. Henderson are,—1. The Funeral Sermon of Mr. Aguttar; 2. A Memoir of him by Mr. Cottle of Bristol, inserted in Mr. Cottle's Poems. We know not whether we learned the anecdote from these sources, or in conversation with Mr. Cottle many years ago. Meantime, to check any wandering conceit that Henderson may be a mere local notoriety, let me inform the reader that he is the man whom Samuel Johnson and Burke went to visit at Bristol upon the mere fame of his attainments, and then in scriptural language pronounced that "*the half had not been told them.*"

† One objection only we have heard to our last article from any person *not* a partisan of Goethe: being plausible, and coming from a man of talents, we reply to it. "Surely," says he, "it cannot be any fault of Goethe's that he is *old.*" Certainly not: no fault at all, but a circumstance of monstrous aggravation connected with one particular fault of Wilhelm Meister, &c.

judging *Meister* by the common rule; and, what is worse, condemning it, let Schlegel bawl as loudly as he pleases." This puts us in mind of a diverting story in the memoirs of an old Cavalier, published by Sir Walter Scott. At the close of the Parliamentary War he was undergoing some examination (about passports, as we recollect) by the Mayor of Hull: upon which occasion the mayor, who was a fierce fanatic, said to him some such words as these: "Now, Captain, you know that God has judged between you and us: and has given us the victory, praise be unto his name! and yet you see how kindly the Parliament treats you. But, if the victory had gone the other way, and you of the malignant party had stood in our shoes,—I suppose now, Captain, you would have evil-entreated us; would have put all manner of affronts upon us; kicked us peradventure, pulled our noses, called us sons of w—s." "You're in the right on't, sir," was the reply of the bluff captain, to the great indignation of the Mayor, and infinite fun of the good-natured aldermen. So also, when the translator tells us that it is to be feared that many will condemn Wilhelm Meister in spite of Schegel's vociferation, we reply, "You're in the right on't, sir:" they will do so; and Schlegel is not the man, neither William nor Frederick, to frighten them from doing so. We have extracted this passage, however, for the sake of pointing the reader's eye to one word in it: "many will judge it by the common *rule*." What rule is *that?* The translator well knows that there *is* no rule: no rule which can stand in the way of fair and impartial criticism; and that he is conjuring up a bugbear which has no existence. In the single cases of epic and dramatic poetry (but in these only as regards the mechanism of the fable) certain rules have undoubtedly obtained an authority which may prejudice the cause of a writer; not so much,

however, by corrupting sound criticism, as by occupying its place. But with regard to a novel, there is no rule which has obtained any "*prescription*" (to speak the language of civil law) but the golden rule of good sense and just feeling; and the translator well knows that in such a case, if a man were disposed to shelter his own want of argument under the authority of some "common rule," he can find no such rule to plead. How do men generally criticise a novel? Just as they examine the acts and conduct, moral or prudential, of their neighbours. And how is that? Is it by quoting the Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle? Do they proceed as the French Consul did when the Dey of Tunis informed him that he meant to cut off his head? Upon which

> "The Consul quoted Wickefort
> And Puffendorf and Grotius;
> And proved from Vattel
> Exceedingly well,
> Such a deed would be quite atrocious."

No: they never trouble Puffendorf and Grotius; but try the case "proprio marte," appealing only to their own judgments and their own feelings. This is wise, they say, and that is foolish: this is indecorous, and that is inconsistent: this argues a bad motive, and that leads to a bad consequence. Or if the novel be German, this is indictably indecent. In this way they judge of actions, in this way of a novel; and in this way we shall judge of Wilhelm Meister; and cannot allow that our criticism shall be forestalled by any pretence that we are opposing mechanic rules, which do not and cannot exist, to the natural and spontaneous movements of the unprejudiced judgment.

"Scribendi rectè SAPERE est principium et fons"—Good sense is the principle and fountain of all just composition.

This is orthodox doctrine all over the world, or ought to be. Next, we presume that in all latitudes and under every meridian a poet stands amenable to criticism for the quality of his sentiments and the passions he attributes to his heroes, heroines, and "pattern people." That the general current of feeling should be deeper than that of ordinary life, nobler, and purer,—is surely no unreasonable postulate: else wherefore is he a poet? Now within a short compass there is no better test by which we can try the style and tone of a poet's feelings than his ideal of the female character as expressed in his heroines. For this purpose we will have a general turn-out and field-day for Mr. Goethe's ladies. They shall all parade before the reader. This, while it answers our end, will provide for *his* amusement. Such a display will be sufficient for the style of sentiment: as to the good sense, *that* will be adequately put on record by every part of our analysis.

Now therefore turn out, ye belles of Germany! turn out before London on this fine 26th of August 1824. *Place aux dames!* Let us have a grand procession to the temple of Paphos with its hundred altars: and Mr. Goethe, nearly 50 years old at the date of Wilhelm Meister, shall be the high-priest; and we will exhibit him surrounded by all "his young Corinthian laity."* Here then, reader, is Mr. Goethe's

I. GALLERY OF FEMALE PORTRAITS.

Mariana.—No. 1 is Mariana, a young actress. With her the novel opens: and her situation is this. She is connected in the tenderest style of clandestine attachment with Wilhelm Meister the hero. Matters have gone so far

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* "*Young Corinthian laity*:" Milton. Apol. for Smectymn.

that she—how shall we express it? Oh! the German *phrase* is that—she "carries a pledge of love beneath her bosom." Well, suppose she does: what's that to us; us and the reader? Why nothing, we allow, unless she asks us to advance money on the *pledge*. The reader is yet but in the vestibule of the tale: he is naturally willing to be pleased, and indisposed to churlish constructions. Undoubtedly he is sorry: wishes it had been otherwise; but he is human himself; and he recollects the old excuse which will be pleaded on this frail planet of ours for thousands of years after we are all in our graves—that they were both young: and that she was artless and beautiful. And finally he forgives them: and, if at the end of the third volume when they must necessarily be a good deal older, he finds them still as much attached to each other as when their hearts were young, he would feel it presumption in himself to remember the case as a transgression. But what is this? Hardly have we gone a few pages further, before we find that—about one month before this lady had surrendered her person to the hero—she had granted all she could grant to one Mr. Norberg a merchant and a vile sensualist. True, says the book, but *that* was for money; she had no money; and how could she do without money? Whereas now, on the contrary, in Wilhelm's case it could not be for money; for, why? he had none; *ergo*, it was for love—pure love. Besides, she was vexed that she had ever encouraged Norberg, after she came to be acquainted with Wilhelm. Vexed! but did she resolve to break with Norberg? Once or twice she treated him harshly, it is true: but hear her latest cabinet council on this matter with her old infamous attendant (p. 65, i.): "I have no choice, continued Mariana; do you decide for me! Cast me away to this side, or to that; mark only

one thing. I think I carry in my bosom a pledge that ought to unite me with him (*i.e.*, Wilhelm) more closely. Consider and determine: whom shall I forsake? whom shall I follow?

"After a short silence, Barbara exclaimed: Strange that youth should still be for extremes." By extremes Barbara means keeping only one; her way of avoiding extremes is to keep both. But hear the hag: "To my view nothing would be easier than for us to combine both the profit and enjoyment. Do you love the one, let the other pay for it: all we have to mind is being sharp enough to keep the two from meeting."

Certainly, that would be awkward: and now what is Mariana's answer? "Do as you please; I can imagine nothing, but I will follow." Bab schemes, and Poll executes. The council rises with the following suggestion from the hag:—"Who knows what circumstances may arise to help us? If Norberg would arrive even now, when Wilhelm is away! who can hinder you from thinking of the one in the arms of the other? I wish you a son and good fortune with him: he will have a rich father."

Adopting this advice, the lady receives Wilhelm dressed in the clothes furnished by Norberg. She is however found out by Wilhelm, who forsakes her; and in the end she dies. Her death is announced in the high German style to Wilhelm: old Bab places a bottle of champagne and three glasses on the table. Then the scene proceeds thus:

"Wilhelm knew not what to say, when the crone in fact *let go* the cork, and filled the three glasses to the brim. Drink!" cried she, having emptied at a draught her foaming glass. "Drink ere the spirit of it pass! This third glass shall froth away untasted to the memory of my unhappy Mariana. How red were her lips when she last

drank your health! Ah! and now for ever pale and cold!" At the next Pitt or Fox dinner this suggestion may perhaps be attended to. Mr. Pitt of course will have a bottle of good old port set for him: for he drank no champagne. As Kotzebue hastened from Germany to the Palais Royal of Paris for consolation on the death of his wife, so does Wilhelm on reading his sweetheart's farewell letters abscond in a transport of grief to —— a coffeehouse, where he disputes upon the stage and acting in general. We are rather sorry for this young creature after all: she has some ingenuous feelings; and she is decidedly the second best person in the novel. The child, which she leaves behind, is fathered by old Bab (drunk perhaps) upon every man she meets; and she absolutely extorts money from one or other person on account of three different fathers. If she meets the reader, she'll father it upon *him*. In the hands now of a skilful artist this surviving memorial of the frail Mariana might have been turned to some account: by Mr. Goethe it is used only as a handle for covering his hero with irresistible ridicule. He doubts whether he is the father of the child; and goes about, asking people in effect, "Do you think I can be the father? Really now, on your honour, has he a look of me?" That Mariana's conduct had given him little reason to confide in anything she could say except upon her death-bed, we admit; and, as to old Bab's assurances, they clearly were open to that objection of the logicians—that they proved nothing by proving a little too much. But can any gravity stand the ridicule of a father's sitting down to examine his child's features by his own? and that he, who would not believe the dying and heart-broken mother, is finally relieved from his doubts (p. 120, ii.) by two old buffoons, who simply assure him that the child is his, and thus pretend to

an authority transcending that of the mother herself? But pass to

No. 2. *Philina.*—This lady is a sort of amalgam of Doll Tear-sheet and the Wife of Bath; as much of a termagant as the first, and as frank-hearted as the second. Mr. Goethe's account of the matter (p. 172, i.) is, that "her chief enjoyment lay in loving one class of men, and being loved by them." In all particulars, but the good ones, she resembles poor Mariana: like her she is an actress; like her she has her "pledge;" and, like Mariana's, this pledge is open to doubts of the learned, on the question of its paternity; for, like her, she is not content with one lover; *not* however, like her, content with two, for she has nearer to two dozen. She plays off the battery of her charms upon every man she meets with: the carnage is naturally great; so that we had half a mind to draw up a list of the killed and wounded. But we must hurry onwards. What becomes of her the reader never learns. Among her lovers, who in general keep her, is one whom she keeps: for he is her footman; a "fair-haired boy" of family. Him she kicks out of her service in vol. the first, p. 174, ostensibly because he will not lay the cloth; but in fact because he has no more money; as appears by p. 228, vol. ii., where she takes him back on his having "cozened from his friends a fresh supply;" and to him she finally awards her "pledge," and we think she does right. For he is a fine young lad—this Frederick; and we like him much: he is generous and not suspicious as "our friend" Wilhelm; and he is *par parenthèse* a great fool, who is willing to pass for such, which the graver fools of the novel are not; they being all "philosophers." Thus pleasantly does this believing man report the case to the infidel Wilhelm: "'Tis a foolish business that I must be raised at last

to the paternal dignity: but she asserts, and the time agrees. At first, that cursed visit, which she paid you after Hamlet, gave me qualms. The pretty flesh-and-blood spirit of that night, if you do not know it, was Philina. This story was in truth a hard dower for me, but, if we cannot be contented with such things, we should not be in love. Fatherhood at any rate depends entirely upon conviction; I am convinced, and so I am a father." But time presses: so adieu! most philanthropic Philina; thou lover of all *man*kind!

No. 3. is *Mrs. Melina.*—She also is an actress with a "pledge," and so forth. But she marries the father, Herr Melina, and we are inclined to hope that all will now be well. And certainly as far as page so and so, the reader or ourselves, if summoned by Mrs. Melina on any trial affecting her reputation, would be most happy to say that whatever little circumstances might have come to our knowledge, which as gentlemen we could not possibly use to the prejudice of a lady, we yet fully believed her to be as irreproachable as that lady who only of all King Arthur's court had the qualification of chastity for wearing the magic girdle; and yet it shrank a little,* until she made a blushing confession that smoothed its wrinkles. This would be our evidence up perhaps to the end of vol. i.; yet afterwards it comes out that she "sighed" for Mr. Meister; and that, if she sighed in vain, it was no fault of hers.

The manners of these good people are pretty much on a level with their characters: our impression is that all are drunk together,—men, women, and children: women are seen lying on the sofa "in no very elegant position:" the children knock their heads against the table: one plays the

* See the ballad somewhere in Percy's *Reliques.*

harp, one the triangle, another the tambourine: some sing canons; another "whistles in the manner of a nightingale," another "gives a symphony *pianissimo* upon the Jew's harp:" and last of all comes an ingenious person who well deserves to be imported by Covent Garden for the improvement of the incantations in Der Freischütz: "by way of termination, Serlo (the manager) gave a fire-work, or what resembled one: for he could imitate the sound of crackers, rockets, and firewheels, with his mouth, in a style of nearly inconceivable correctness. You had only to shut your eyes, and the deception was complete." After the lyrical confusion of these Dutch concerts "it follows of course that men and women fling their glasses into the street, the men fling the punch-bowl at each other's heads, and a storm succeeds which the watch (Neptune and his Tritons)"* are called in to appease. Even from personal uncleanliness Mr. Goethe thinks it possible to derive a grace. "The white négligée"

* See the admirable description in Mr. Lamb's Dramatic Specimens. The situation is this: a number of people carousing in an upper room of a tavern become so thoroughly drunk as to fancy themselves in a ship far out at sea; and their own unsteady footing in 'walking the deck,' they conclude to be the natural effect from the tumbling billows of the angry ocean, which in fact is gathering rapidly into every sign of a coming storm. One man in his anxiety therefore climbs a bed-post, which he takes for the mast head, and reports the most awful appearances ahead. By his advice they fall to lightening ship: out of the windows they throw overboard beds, tables, chairs, the good landlady's crockery, bottles, glasses, &c., working in agonies of haste for dear life. By this time the uproar and hurly-burly has reached the ears of the police, who come in a body up stairs: but the drunkards, conceiving them to be sea-gods—Neptune, Triton, &c., begin to worship them. What accounts for this intrusion of *Pagan* adorations—is this: viz. that originally the admirable scene was derived from a Greek comic sketch, though transplanted into the English drama with so much of life-like effect, as really to seem a native English growth.

of Philina, because it was "not superstitiously clean" is said to have given her "a frank and domestic air." But the highest scene of this nature is the bedroom of Mariana; it passes all belief; "Combs, soap, towels, *with the traces of their use*, were not concealed. Music, portions of plays, and pairs of shoes, washes and Italian flowers, pincushions, hair-skewers, rouge-pots and ribbons, books and straw-hats—all were united by a common element, powder and dust.' This is the room into which she introduces her lover: and this is by no means the worst part of the description: the last sentence is too bad for quotation, and appears to have been the joint product of Dean Swift and a German Sentimentalist.

Well, but these people are not people of condition. Come we then to two women of rank; and first for

The Countess, who shall be No. 4 in the Goethian gallery. Wilhelm Meister has come within her husband's castle gates attached to a company of strolling players: and, if any slight distinctions are made in his favour, they are tributes to his personal merits, and not at all to any such pretensions as could place him on a level with a woman of quality. In general he is treated as his companions; who seem to be viewed as a *tertium quod* between footmen and dogs. Indeed, the dogs have the advantage; for no doubt the dogs of a German "Graf" have substantial kennels: whereas Wilhelm and his party, on presenting themselves at the inhabited castle of the Count, are dismissed with mockery and insults to an old dilapidated building which is not weather-proof; and, though invited guests, are inhospitably left without refreshments, fire, or candles, in the midst of storm, rain, and darkness. In some points they are raised to a level with the dogs: for, as a man will now and then toss a bone to a favourite pointer, so does a

guest of the Count's who patronizes merit "contrive to send over many an odd bottle of champagne to the actors." In others they even think themselves far above the dogs: for "many times, particularly after dinner, the whole company were called out before the noble guests; an honour which the artists regarded as the most flattering in the world:" but others question the inference, observing "that on these very occasions the servants and huntsmen were ordered to bring in a multitude of hounds, and to lead strings of horses about the court of the castle." Such is the rank which Mr. Meister holds in her ladyship's establishment: and note that he has hardly been in her presence more than once; on which occasion he is summoned to read to her, but not allowed to proceed, and finally dismissed with the present of a "waistcoat." Such being the position of our waistcoateer in regard to the Countess, which we have sketched with a careful selection of circumstances, let the reader now say what he thinks of the following *scena*—and of the "pure soul" (p. 300, i.) of that noble matron who is joint performer in it. Wilhelm has been summoned again to read before the ladies, merely because they "felt the time rather tedious" whilst waiting for company, and is perhaps anticipating a pair of trowsers to match his waistcoat. Being "ordered" by the ladies to read, he reads: but his weak mind is so overwhelmed by the splendid dress of the Countess that he reads very ill. Bad reading is not a thing to be stood: and accordingly, on different pretexts, the other ladies retire, and he is left alone with the Countess. She has presented him *not* with a pair of trowsers, as we falsely predicted, but with a diamond ring: he has knelt down to thank her, and has seized her left hand. Then the *scena* proceeds thus: "He kissed her hand, and meant to rise; but as in dreams some strange

thing fades and changes into something stranger, so, without knowing how it happened, he found the Countess in his arms; her lips were resting upon his; and their warm mutual kisses were yielding them that blessedness, which mortals sip from the topmost sparkling foam on the freshly poured cup of love. Her head lay upon his shoulder; the disordered ringlets and ruffles were forgotten. She had thrown her arm around him: he clasped her with vivacity; and pressed her again and again to his breast. O that such a moment could but last for ever! And *wo to envious fate* that shortened even this brief moment to our friends!" Well done, Mr. Goethe! It well befits that he who thinks it rational to bully fate, should think it laudable and symptomatic of a "a pure soul" to act as this German matron acts with this itinerant player. It is true that she tears herself away "with a shriek;" but the shriek, as we discover long afterwards, proceeds not from any pangs of conscience but from pangs of body; Wilhelm having pressed too closely against a miniature of her husband which hung at her bosom. There is another *scena* of a still worse description prepared for the Countess,* but interrupted by the sudden return of the Count, for which we have no room, and in which the next lady on the roll plays a part for which decorum has no name. This lady is

The Baroness; and she is the friend and companion of the Countess. Whilst the latter was dallying with "our friend," "the Baroness, in the meantime, had selected Laertes, who, being a spirited and lively young man, pleased her very much; and who, woman-hater as he was,

* It is afterwards related to her; and the passage, which describes the effect upon her mind (p. 317, vol. i.), is about the most infamous in any book.

felt unwilling to refuse a passing adventure." Laertes, be it observed—this condescending gentleman who is for once disposed to relax his general rule of conduct in favour of the Baroness—is also a strolling player, and being such is of course a sharer in the general indignities thrown upon the theatrical company. In the present case his "passing adventure" was unpleasantly disturbed by a satirical remark of the lady's husband, who was aware of his intentions; for Laertes "happening once to celebrate her praises, and give her the preference to every other of her sex, the Baron with a grin replied: 'I see how matters stand: our fair friend (meaning by *our fair friend* his own wife) has got a fresh inmate for her stalls. Every stranger thinks he is the first whom this manner has *concerned:* but he is grievously mistaken; for all of us, at one time or another, have been trotted round this course. Man, youth, or boy, be he who he like, each must devote himself to her service for a season; must hang about her; and toil and long to gain her favour.'" (P. 284, i.) "After this discovery, Laertes felt heartily ashamed that vanity should have again misled him to think *well,* even in the smallest degree, of any woman whatsoever." That the Baroness wished to intrigue with himself was so far a reason with him for "thinking well" of HER: but that she could ever have thought any body else worthy of this honour restores him to his amiable abhorrence of her sex; and forthwith "he forsook the Baroness entirely." By the way, how Laertes came by his hatred of women, and the abominable history of his "double wounds," the reader must look for in Mr. Goethe: in German novels such things may be tolerated, as also in English brothels; and it may be sought for in either place: but for us, *nous autres Anglois*,—

"Non licet esse tam disertis
Qui musas colimus severiores."

Forsaken by Laertes, the Baroness looks about for a substitute; and, finding no better, she takes up with one Mr. Jarno. And who is Mr. Jarno? What part does *he* play in this play? He is an old gentleman, who has the honour to be also a major and a philosopher; and he plays the parts of bore, of ninny, and also (but not with equal success) of Socrates. Him then, this Major Socrates, for want of some Alcibiades, the Baroness condescends to "trot," as the Baron phrases it; and trotting him we shall leave her. For what she does in her own person, the reader will not be disposed to apply any very respectful names to her: but one thing there is which she attempts to do for her friend the Countess (as Goethe acknowledges at p. 306, i.), which entitles her to a still worse name; a name not in our vocabulary; but it will be found in that of Mr. Goethe, who applies it (but very superfluously) to old Barbara.

• *Theresa.*—This lady is thus described by Mr. Jarno: "Fräulein Theresa (*i.e.*, in French English, *Mees Terése*) is a lady such as you will rarely see. She puts many a man to shame: I may say she is a genuine Amazon, while others are but pretty counterfeits, that wander up and down the world in that ambiguous dress." Yes, an Amazon she is —not destined we hope to propagate the race in England —although, by the way, not *the* Amazon:* however, she is far better entitled to the name, for in "putting men to

* By which title, for no reason upon earth (since she neither amputates one of her breasts, nor in any other point affects the Amazon) is constantly designated, a fair incognita in a riding-habit, whom Wilhelm had once seen, and having seen had of course fallen in love with, not being at the time in love with more than three other persons.

shame" she is not exceeded by any lady in the novel. Her first introduction to "our friend" is a fair specimen of Amazonian *bienséance*. The reader must understand that Wilhelm has just arrived at her house as an invited guest; has never seen her before; and that both the lady and himself are young unmarried persons. "She *entered Wilhelm's room*, inquiring if he wanted anything. 'Pardon me,' said she, 'for having lodged you in a chamber which the smell of paint still renders disagreeable: my little dwelling is but just made ready: you are handselling this room, which is appointed for my guests. In other points you have many things to pardon. My cook has run away, and a serving-man has bruised his hand. I *might* (might ?) be forced to manage all myself; and, if it *were* so (*were* so ?), we must just* put up with it. One is plagued with nobody so much as with one's servants: not one of them will serve you, scarcely even serve himself.' She said a good deal more on different matters: in general she seemed to like to speak." This the reader will find no difficulty in allowing; for, in answer to the very first words that Wilhelm utters, she proposes to tell him her whole history in a confidential way. Listen to her: thus speaks the Amazonian Fraülein (p. 39, iii.) "Let us get entirely acquainted as speedily as possible. The history of every person paints his character. I will tell you what my life has been: do you too place a little trust in me; and let us be united even when distance parts us." Such is the sentimental overture; after which the reader will not be surprised to learn that in the evening Wilhelm's chamber-door opens, and in steps with a bow a "hand-

* "Just," in this use of it, is a Hyperboreanism, and still intelligible in some provinces.

some hunter boy," viz., Fraülein Theresa in boy's clothes. "Come along!" says she; "and they went accordingly." (P. 43.) As they walked, "among some general remarks" Theresa asked him the following question—not general, but "*London particular*:" "*Are you free?*" (meaning free to make proposals to any woman he met). "I think I am," said he; "and yet I do not wish it." By which he meant that he thought Mariana was dead, but (kind creature) "did not wish" her to be dead. "Good!" said she: "that indicates a complicated story: you also will have something to relate." Conversing thus, they ascended the height, and placed themselves beside a lofty oak. "Here," said she, "beneath this German tree will I disclose to you the history of a German maiden: listen to me patiently" (p. 44): that is, we suppose, with a German patience. But English patience will not tolerate what follows. We have already seen something of Mr. Goethe; else could it be credited that the most obtuse of old libertines could put into the mouth of a young unmarried woman, designed for a model of propriety and good sense, as fit matter for her very earliest communication with a young man, the secret history of her own mother's* adulterous intrigues? Adultery, by way of displaying her virgin modesty: her mother's adultery in testimony of her filial piety! So it is, however: and with a single "alas! that I should have to say so of my mother" (p. 44), given to the regrets and the delicacies of the case, this intrepid Amazon proceeds to tell how her father was "a wealthy noble," "a tender father, and an

* It is true that in the end, the person in question turns out *not* to be her mother: but as yet Theresa has no suspicion of such a discovery.

upright friend; an excellent *economist*," who had "but one fault;" and what was *that?* "he was too compliant to a wife whose nature was the opposite of his." Then she goes on to say how this wife could not endure women—no, not her own daughter even, and therefore surrounded herself with men, who joined her in acting plays on a private stage: how "it was easy to perceive that," even amongst the men, "she did not look on all alike:" how she, the daughter, "gave sharper heed," made sundry discoveries; "held her tongue however," until the servants, whom she "was used to watch like a falcon" (p. 47, iii.), presuming upon the mother's conduct, began to "despise the father's regulations;" upon which she discovered all to that person; who answered however with a *smile* "Good girl! I know it all; be quiet, bear it patiently;" which doctrine she disapproved: how at length her mother's extravagance "occasioned many a *conference* between her parents:" but "for a long time the evil was not helped, until at last the *passions* of her mother brought the business to a head." "Her first gallant," it seems ("first" by the way—in what sense? In order of time, or of favour?) "became unfaithful in a glaring manner:" upon which her conduct took so capricious an air, that some sort of arrangement was made, in virtue of which she consented, for "a considerable sum" of money, to travel for the benefit of her passions to the south of France. And so the tale proceeds: for what end let us ask Mr. Goethe, which could not have been as well answered by any other of ten thousand expedients, as by this monstrous outrage upon filial affection, virgin modesty, or (to put it on the lowest ground) upon mere sexual pride; which alone in any place on this earth except "under a German tree" would surely have been sufficient to restrain a female from such an exposure of female frailty? Indeed, if we

come to that, for what end that needed to be answered at all? Notice this, reader; for the fair inference is—that all this volunteer exposure of her mother's depravity, delivered by a young "German maiden" dressed in men's clothes to a strolling player whom she had never seen or heard of before, is introduced as an episode that needs no other justification than its own inherent attractions.

We are disposed to have done with this young lady. Yet there is one circumstance about her, which to our English notions appears so truly comic that before we dismiss her we shall advert to it. Many years ago there was a *crim. con.* case brought into the English courts, in the course of which the love-letters of the noble marquis, heir to a dukedom, were produced, read, and of course published in all the newspapers. The matter, the "subject-matter" (as grave men say), of such epistles can generally be guessed at even by persons not destined to set the Thames on fire. How great then was the astonishment and diversion of the public on finding that the staple article in these tender communications was the price of oats at Oxford! We were at Oxford during the time; and well remember the astonishment of the Corn-market on finding that any part of their proceedings, that an unexceptionable price-current of Oxon grain, could by possibility have found its way into the billets-doux of an enamoured patrician. "Feed oats, 40s. Potato oats, same as per last: tick beans looking up." Undoubtedly, "*Oats is riz*" cannot be denied to be a just and laudable communication to and from certain quarters, especially grooms and ostlers: but it struck the English public as *not* the appropriate basis for a lover's correspondence. From this opinion however Mr. Goethe evidently dissents: for the whole sentiment of Theresa's character and situation is built upon the solid base of tare and tret,

alligation, rebate, and "such branches of learning." All this she had probably learned from her father, who (as we know) was a great "economist," and in the household of a neighbouring lady whom she had "assisted in *struggling* with her steward and domestics" (masters and servants, by the way, appear to be viewed by Goethe as necessary belligerents). Economy at all events is the basis of her amatory correspondence; "our conversation, says she (speaking of her lover), always in the end grew economical" (p. 58), and from household economy her lover drew her on by tender and seductive insinuations to political economy. Sentimental creatures! what a delicate transition from "tallow" and "raw hides" to the "bullion question," "circulating medium," and the "Exchequer Bills' bill." The Malthusian view of population, we suppose, would be rather an unwelcome topic; not however on the score of delicacy, as the reader will see by the following account from the economic lady herself of the way in which she contrived to introduce herself in an economic phasis to her economic lover. It surpasses the Oxford price-current. "The greatest service which I did my benefactress, was in bringing into order the extensive forests which belonged to her. In this precious property matters still went on according to the old routine; without regularity, without plan; no end to theft and fraud. Many hills were standing bare; an equal growth was nowhere to be found but in the oldest cuttings. I personally visited the whole of them with an experienced forester. I got the woods correctly measured: I set men to hew, to sow" (not *sew*, reader, don't mistake Theresa), "to sow, to plant. That I might mount more readily on horseback, and also walk on foot with less obstruction, I had a suit of men's clothes made for me: I was in many places, I was feared in all.

"Hearing that our young friends with Lothario were purposing to have another hunt, it came into my head for the first time in my life to make a figure; or, that I may not do myself injustice, to pass in the eyes of this noble gentleman for what I was. I put on my man's clothes, took my gun upon my shoulder, and went forward with our hunters, to await the party on our marches. They came: Lothario did not know me: a nephew of the lady's introduced me to him as a clever forester; joked about my youth, and carried on his jesting in my praise, until at last Lothario recognised me. The nephew seconded my project, as if we had concocted it together" (concocted! what a word!) "He circumstantially and gratefully described what I had done for the estates of his aunt, and consequently for himself."

Now at this point, laying all things together—the male attire—the gun—the forest—and the ominous name of the lover, we are afraid that the reader is looking to hear of something not quite correct; that in short he is anticipating some

"Speluncam Dido dux et Trojanus eandem Deveniunt."

O fie! reader. How *can* you have such reprehensible thoughts? Nothing of the kind: No, no: we are happy to contradict such scandal, and to assure the public that nothing took place but what was perfectly "accurate" and as it should be. The whole went off in a blaze of Political Economy, which we doubt not would have had even Mr. Ricardo's approbation. The following is Mr. Goethe's report, which may be looked upon as official.

"Lothario listened with attention; he talked with me; inquired concerning all particulars of the estates and district. I submitted certain projects of improvements to him,

which he sanctioned; telling me of similar examples, and strengthening my arguments by the connexion which he gave them. My satisfaction grew more perfect every moment. From that day he showed a true respect for me, a fine trust in me: in company he usually spoke to me; asked for my opinion; and appeared to be persuaded that, in household matters, nothing was unknown to me. His sympathy excited me extremely: even when the conversation was of general finance and political economy, he used to lead me to take a part in it."

We are loath to part with this most amusing Theresa: she is a political economist, and so are we; naturally therefore we love her. We recite one more anecdote about her, and so leave the reader *con la bocca dolce.* The reader has heard of the proud but poor Gascon who was overheard calling to his son at night—"Chevalier, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?" Some such little household meditation furnishes the sentiment with which Theresa clenches one of her tenderest scenes. She has been confiding her history, her woes, and her despondency, to "our friend;" and had indeed "as the sun went down" (milking time), "*both* her fine eyes," we need not say, "filled with tears." Such is the scene; and thus it is wound up: "Theresa spoke not; she laid her hand upon her new friend's hands; he kissed it with emotion; she dried her tears and rose. 'Let us return, and see that *all is right,*' said she." All right! all right behind! *Chevalier, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?*

Aurelia.—This lady is not, like Theresa, a "German maiden," for, indeed, she is not a maiden at all: neither has she a "German tree" to stand under: but, for all that, she is quite as well disposed to tell her German story in a German way. Let her speak for herself: "My friend,"

says she to "our friend,"* "it is but a few minutes since we saw each other first, and already you are going to become my confidant" (p. 78). Not as though he has offered to be so: nothing of the sort: but she is resolved he shall be so. What determinate kindness! What resolute liberality! For this time, however, her liberality is balked: for in bounces the philanthropic Philina; interrupts Aurelia; and, upon that lady's leaving the room, tells her story *for* her in the following elegant (though not quite accurate) terms: "Pretty things are going on here, just of the sort I like. Aurelia has had a hapless love-affair with some nobleman, who seems to be a very stately person, one that I myself could like to see some day. He has left her a memorial, or I much mistake. There is a boy running over the house, of three years old or *thereby* (*i.e.*, thereabouts); the papa must be a very pretty fellow. Commonly I cannot suffer children, but this brat quite delights me. I have calculated Aurelia's business. The death of her husband, the new acquaintance, the child's age, all things agree. But now her spark has gone his ways; for a year she has not seen a glimpse of him. She is beside herself and inconsolable for this. The more fool she!" From Aurelia she passes to Aurelia's brother: and, though it is digressing a little, we must communicate her little memoir of this gentleman's "passions;" for naturally he has his passions as well as other people; every gentleman has a right to his passions; say, a couple of passions, or "thereby," to use the translator's phrase: but Mr. Serlo, the gentleman in question, is really unreasonable, as the muster-roll will show; the reader will be so good as to keep count. "Her brother,"

* "*Our friend*" is the general designation, throughout the novel, of the hero.

proceeds the frank-hearted Philina, "has a dancing girl among his troop, with whom he stands on pretty terms" (*one*); "an actress to whom he is betrothed" (*two*); "in the town some other women whom he courts" (women, observe, accusative plural; that must at least make *three*, *four*, *five*); "I, too, am on his list" (*six*). "The more fool he! Of the rest thou shalt hear to-morrow." Verily, this Mr. Serlo has laid in a pretty fair winter's provision for his "passions!" The loving speaker concludes with informing Wilhelm that she, Philina, has for her part fallen in love with himself; begs him, however, to fall in love with Aurelia, because in that case "the chase would be worth beholding. She (that is, Aurelia) pursues her faithless swain, thou her, I thee, her brother me." Certainly an ingenious design for a reel of eight even in merry England: but what would it be then in Germany, where each man might (as we know by Wilhelm, &c.) pursue all the four women at once, and be pursued by as many of the four as thought fit. Our English brains whirl at the thought of the cycles and epicycles, the vortices, the osculating curves, they would describe: what a practical commentary on the doctrine of combinations and permutations! What a lesson to English bell-ringers on the art of ringing changes! what "triple bobs" and "bob majors" would result! What a kaleidoscope to look into! O ye deities, that preside over men's Sides, protect all Christian ones from the siege of inextinguishable laughter which threatens them at this spectacle of eight heavy high-German lovers engaged in this amorous "barley-break!"*

To recover our gravity, let us return to Aurelia's story

* "*Barley-Break*:" see any poet of 1600-1640: Sir J. Suckling, for instance.

which she tells herself to Wilhelm. Not having, like a Theresa, any family adulteries to record in the lineal, she seeks them in the collateral branches; and instead of her mother's intrigues, recites her aunt's, who "resigned herself headlong to every impulse." There is a description of this lady's paramours, retiring from her society, which it is absolutely impossible to quote. Quitting her aunt's intrigues, she comes to one of her own. But we have had too much of such matter; and of this we shall notice only one circumstance of horrible aggravation, viz., the particular situation in which it commenced. This we state in the words of the translation: "My husband grew sick, his strength was visibly decaying; anxiety for him interrupted my general indifference. *It was at this time* that I formed an acquaintance (viz., with Lothario) which opened up a new life for me; a new and *quicker* one, for it will soon be done." . . . One other part of this lady's conduct merits notice for its exquisite *Germanity:* most strikingly and *cuttingly*, it shows what difference a few score leagues will make in the moral quality of actions: that, which in Germany is but the characteristic act of a high-minded sentimentalist, would in England bring the party within the cutting and maiming act. The case is this. Mr. Meister, at the close of her story, volunteers a vow, for no reason that we can see but that he may have the pleasure of breaking it; which he does. "Accept a vow," says he, as if it had been a peach. "I accept it, said she, and made a movement with her right hand, as if meaning to take hold his, but instantly she darted it into her pocket, pulled out her dagger as quick as lightning, and scored with the edge and point of it across his hand. He hastily drew back his arm" (Meister, German Meister even, does not like this); "but the blood was already running down. One

must mark you men rather sharply, if one means you to take heed, cried she." . . . "She ran to her drawer; brought lint with other apparatus; stanched the blood; and viewed the wound attentively. *It went across the palm, close under the thumb, dividing the life-lines, and running towards the little finger.* She bound it up in silence with a significant reflective look."

Mignon.—The situation or character, one or both, of this young person, is relied upon by all the admirers of Goethe as the most brilliant achievement of his poetic powers. We, on our part, are no less ready to take our stand on this as the most unequivocal evidence of depraved taste and defective sensibility. The reader might in this instance judge for himself with very little waste of time, if he were to mark the margin of those paragraphs in which the name of Mignon occurs, and to read them detached from all the rest. An odd way, we admit, of examining a work of any art, if it were really composed on just principles of art: and the inference is pretty plain, where such an insulation is possible; which, in the case of Mignon, it is. The translator, indeed, is bound to think *not:* for, with a peculiar infelicity of judgment natural enough to a critic who writes in the character of a eulogist, he says of this person, that "her history runs like a thread of gold through the tissue of the narrative, connecting with the heart much that were else addressed only to the head." But a glittering metaphor is always suspicious in criticism: in this case it should naturally imply that Mignon in some way or other modifies the action and actors of the piece. Now, it is certain that never was there a character in drama or in novel on which any stress was laid, which so little influenced the movement of the story. Nothing is either hastened or retarded by Mignon: she neither acts nor is acted upon:

and we challenge the critic to point to any incident or situation of interest which would not remain uninjured though Mignon were wholly removed from the story. So removeable a person can hardly be a connecting thread of gold; unless, indeed, under the notion of a thread which everywhere betrays, by difference of colour or substance, its refusal to blend with the surrounding tissue; a notion which is far from the meaning of the critic. But without dwelling on this objection: the relation of Mignon to the other characters and the series of the incidents is none at all: but, waiving this, let us examine her character and her situation each for itself, and not as any part of a novel. The character in this case, if Mignon can be said to have one, arises out of the situation. And what is that? For the information of the reader, we shall state it as accurately as possible. First of all, Mignon is the offspring of an incestuous connexion between a brother and sister. Here let us pause one moment to point the reader's attention to Mr. Goethe, who is now at his old tricks; never relying on the grand high road sensibilities of human nature, but always travelling into bypaths of unnatural or unhallowed interest. Suicide, adultery, incest, monstrous situations, or manifestations of supernatural power, are the stimulants to which he constantly resorts in order to rouse his own feelings, originally feeble, and, long before the date of this work, grown torpid from artificial excitement. In the case before us, what purpose is answered by the use of an expedient, the very name of which is terrific and appalling to men of all nations, habits, and religions? What comes of it? What use, what result can be pleaded to justify the tampering with such tremendous agencies? The father of Mignon, it may be answered, goes mad. He does: but is a madness, such as his, a justifying occasion for such an adjura-

tion ; is this a *dignus vindice nodus?* a madness, which is mere senile dotage and fatuity, pure childish imbecility, without passion, without dignity, and characterized by no one feeling but such as is base and selfish, viz., a clinging to life, and an inexplicable *dread of little boys!* A state so mean might surely have arisen from some cause less awful: and we must add that a state so capriciously and fantastically conceived, so little arising out of any determinate case of passion, or capable of expressing any case of passion as its natural language, is to be justified only by a downright affidavit to the facts, and is not a proper object for the contemplation of a poet, we submit. Madhouses doubtless furnish many cases of fatuity, no less eccentric and to all appearance arbitrary : as facts, as known realities, they do not on this account cease to be affecting ; but as poetic creations, which must include their own law, they become unintelligible and monstrous. Besides, we are conceding too much to Mr. Goethe : the fatuity of the old man is nowhere connected with the unhappy circumstances of his previous life ; on the whole it seems to be the product of mere constitutional weakness of brain, or probably is a liver case : for he is put under the care of a mad doctor ; and, by the help chiefly of a *course of newspapers*, he begins to recover ; and finally he recovers altogether by one of the oddest prescriptions in the world : he puts a glassful of laudanum into a "firm, little, ground-glass phial :" of this, however, he never drinks, but simply keeps it in his pocket ; and the consciousness that he carries suicide in his waistcoat pocket reconciles him to life, and puts the finishing hand to the "recovery of his reason" (p. 274). With such a pocket companion about him, the reader would swear now that this old gentleman, if he must absolutely commit suicide for the good of the novel, will,

die by laudanum. Why else have we so circumstantial an account of the "ground-glass phial," drawn up as if by some great auctioneer—Christie or Squibb—for some great catalogue (" No. so and so, one firm, little, ground-glass phial"). But no : he who is born to be hanged will never be drowned; and the latter end of the old half-wit is as follows: being discharged as cured (or incurable) he one day enters a nobleman's house, where by the way he had no sort of introduction; in this house, as it happens, Wilhelm Meister is a visitor, and has some difficulty in recognising his former friend "an *old* harper with a long beard" in a *young* gentleman, who is practising as a dandy in an early stage. Goethe has an irresistible propensity to freeze his own attempts at the pathetic by a blighting air of the ludicrous. Accordingly in the present case he introduces his man of woe as " cleanly and genteelly dressed ;" " beard vanished ;* hair dressed with some attention to the mode ; and in his countenance the *look of age no longer to be seen.*" This last item certainly is as wondrous as Mr. Coleridge's *reading fly* : and we suspect that the old Æson, who had thus recovered his juvenility, deceived himself when he fancied that he carried his laudanum as a mere *reversionary* friend who held a sinecure in his waistcoat pocket; that in fact he must have drunk of it " pretty considerably." Be that as it may, at his first *début* he behaves decently; rather dull he is, perhaps, but rational, " cleanly," polite, and (we are happy to state) able to face any little boy, the most determined that ever carried pop-gun. But such heroism could not be expected to last for ever : soon after he finds a MS. which contains an account of his own life; and upon reading it he prepares for suicide. And let *us* pre-

* " *Vanished :*" or should we read perhaps *varnished?*

pare also, as short-hand writers to a genuine GERMAN SUICIDE! In such a case now, if the novel were an English novel, supposing, for instance, of our composition, who are English reviewers, or of our reader's composition (who are probably English readers); if then we were reduced to the painful necessity of inflicting capital punishment upon one or two of our characters (as surely in our own novel, where all the people are our own creatures, we have the clearest right to put all of them to death); matters, we say, being come to that pass that we were called on to make an example of a mutineer or two, and it were fully agreed that the thing must be; we should cause them to take their laudanum, or their rifle bullet, as the case might be, and die "*sans phrase;*" die (as our friend "the Dramatist" says):

> "Die nobly, die like demigods."

Not so our German: he takes the matter more coolly; and dies transcendentally; "by cold gradation and well-balanced form." First of all, he became convinced that it was now "impossible for him to live:" that is, the idea struck him in the way of a theory: it was a new idea, a German idea, and he was pleased with it. Next he considered that, as he designed to depart this life "se offendendo." "Argal" if the water would not come to him he must look out for the water; so he pulls out the "ground-glass phial," and pours out his laudanum into a glass of "almond milk." Almond milk! Was there ever such a German blunder! But to proceed: having mixed his potion, a potion unknown to all the pharmacopœias in Christendom, "he raised it to his mouth; but he shuddered when it reached his lips; he set it down untasted; went out to walk once more across the garden," &c. (p. 284.) O fie,

fie! Mr. Mignonette![*] this is sad work: "walking across the garden," and "shuddering," and "doing nothing," as Macmorris (*Henry V.*) says, "when by Chrish there is work to be done, and throats to be cut." He returns from the garden, and is balked in his purpose by a scene too ludicrous to mention amongst such tender and affecting matter; and thus for one day he gets a reprieve. Now this is what we call false mercy: well knowing that his man was to die, why should Mr. G. keep him lingering in this absurd way? Such a line of conduct shall have no countenance in any novel that we may write. Once let a man of ours be condemned, and if he won't drink off his laudanum, then (as Bernardine says, *Measure for Measure*) we will "beat out his brains with billets," but he shall die that same day, without further trouble to ourselves or our readers. Now, on the contrary, Mr. Mignonette takes three days in dying: within which term we are bold to say that any reasonable man would have been sat upon by the coroner, buried, unburied by the resurrection-man, and demonstrated upon by the anatomical Professor. Well, to proceed

[*] His name is *not* Mignonette, Mr. Goethe will say. No: in fact he has no name: but he is father to Mignon; and therefore in default of a better name we cannot see why we should not be at liberty to call him Mignonette.

> "Si tibi Mistyllus coquus . . . . vocatur,
> Dicetur quare non T' ara t' alla mihi?"

Not having a Martial at hand, we must leave a little gap in the first line to be filled up by those who have: *Æmiliane* is perhaps the word. The names in Wilhelm Meister are of themselves worthy of notice, as furnishing a sufficient evidence of Goethe's capriciousness and fantastic search after oddity. Most of the Germans, for no possible reason, have Italian names ending in *o* and *a* (the Italians on the other hand have not); of one Italian name (*Jarno*) Goethe himself says that "nobody knows what to make of it." Our own theory is that it comes by syncope from Jargono.

with this long concern of Mr. Mignonette's suicide, which travels as slowly as a Chancery suit or as the York coach in Charles II.'s reign (note : this coach took fourteen days between York and London, *vide* Eden's *State of the Poor*). To proceed, we say : on the second day, Mr. Mignonette cut his own throat with his own razor : and *that*, you will say, was doing something towards the object we all have in view. It was ; at least it might seem so ; but there's no trusting to appearances ; it's not every man that will die because his throat is cut : a Cambridge man of this day* (*Diary of an Invalid*) saw a man at Rome, who, or whose head rather, continued to express various sentiments through his eyes after he (or his head) had been entirely amputated from him (or his body). By the way, this man might have some little headache perhaps, but he must have been charmingly free from indigestion. But this is digressing : to return to Mr. Mignonette. In conversing with a friend upon his case, we took a bet that, for all his throat was cut, he would talk again, and talk very well too. Our friend conceived the thing to be impossible ; but he knew nothing of German. "It can*not* be," said he, "for when the larynx—" "Ay, bless your heart!" we interrupted him, "but in this case the larynx of the party was a German larynx." However, to go on with Mr. Mignonette's suicide. His throat is cut ; and still, as Macmorris would be confounded to hear, "by Chrish there is nothing done :" for a doctor mends it again (p. 283), and at p. 284 we win our bet ; for he talks as well as ever he did in his life ; only we are concerned to say that his fear of little boys returns. But still he talks

* Matthews, a man of extraordinary intellectual promise, and a special friend of Lord Byron's. He defrauded all the expectations of his friends by dying prematurely. The reader will do well, however, to look into his *Diary*.

down to the very last line of p. 284; in which line, by the way, is the very last word he is known to have uttered; and that is "glass;" not, however, that well-known unexceptionable "firm little ground-glass phial," but another which had less right to his dying recollections. Now then, having heard the "last word of dying Mignonette," the reader fondly conceives that certainly Mignonette is dead. *Mit nichten*, as they say in Germany, by no means; Mignonette is *not* dead, "nor like to be for one day"; nor perhaps would he have been dead at this moment if he had not been a *German* Mignonette; being so, however, the whole benefit of a German throat is defeated. His throat is mended by the surgeon; but having once conceived a German theory that it was impossible for him to live, although he is so composed as to relate his own theory and the incident which caused it, he undoes all that the doctor has done, tears away the bandages, and bleeds to death. This event is ascertained on the morning after he had uttered his last word, "glass;" the brittle glass of Mignonette's life is at length broken past even a German skill to repair it; and Mignonette is dead,—dead as a door nail, we believe; though we have still some doubts whether he will not again be mended and reappear in some future novel; our reason for which is not merely his extreme tenacity of life, which is like that of a tortoise, but also because we observe that though he is said to be dead, he is not buried; nor does anybody take any further notice of him or ever mention his name; but all about him fall to marrying and giving in marriage; and a few pages wind up the whole novel in a grand *bravura* of kissing and catch-match-making: we have Mr. Goethe's word for it, however, that Mignonette is dead, and he ought to know. But, be that as it may, nothing is so remarkable as the extreme length of time

which it took to do the trick: not until "the third rosy-fingered morn appears" (to speak Homerically) is the suicide accomplished; three days it took to kill this old young man, this flower, this Mignonette: which we take to be, if not the boldest, the longest suicide on record. And so much for Mr. Mignonette; and so much for a German suicide.*

HISTORY OF MR. MEISTER'S "AFFAIRS OF THE HEART."

First we find him "in love" (oh! dishonoured phrase!) with Mariana; rapturously in love, if the word of Mr. Goethe were a sufficient guarantee. Not so, however. An author may assert what he will of his own creatures; and as long as he does not himself contradict it by the sentiments, wishes, or conduct which he attributes to them, we are to take his word for it; but no longer. We, who cannot condescend to call by the name of "love" the fancies for a pretty face, which vanish before a week's absence or before a face somewhat prettier, still less the appetites of a selfish voluptuary, know what to think of Wilhelm's passion, its depth, and its purity, when we find (p. 211, i.) "the current of his spirits and ideas" stopped by "the spasm of a sharp jealousy." Jealousy about whom? Mariana? No, but Philina. And by whom excited? By the "boy" Frederick. His jealousy was no light one; it was "a fierce jealousy" (p. 221, i.); it caused him "a general discomfort, such as he had never felt in his life before (p. 211, i.); and, had not decency restrained him, he could have "crushed in pieces all the people round him" (p. 221, i.) Such a jealousy, with regard to Philina, is incompatible, we presume,

* Mignonette has taken so long in killing that we have no room for Mignon in the gallery; but as she is easily detached from the novel, we hope to present her on some other opportunity as a cabinet picture.

with any real fervour of love for Mariana: we are now therefore at liberty to infer that Mariana is dethroned, and that Philina reigneth in her stead. Next he is "in love" with the Countess; and Philina seldom appears to him as an object of any other feelings than those of contempt. Fourthly, at p. 45, ii., he falls desperately in love with "the Amazon," *i.e.*, a young lady mounted on a grey courser, and wrapped up in "a man's white great-coat." His love for this *incognita* holds on throughout the work like the standing bass, but not so as to prevent a running accompaniment, in the treble, of various other "passions." And these passions not merely succeed each other with rapidity, but are often all upon him at once; at p. 64, ii., "the recollection of the amiable Countess is to Wilhelm infinitely sweet; but anon, the figure of the noble Amazon would step between;" and two pages further on he is indulging in day-dreams that "perhaps Mariana might appear," or, "above all, the beauty whom he worshipped" (*i.e.*, the Amazon). Here, therefore, there is a sort of glee for three voices between the Countess, Mariana, and the Amazon. Fifthly, he is in love with Theresa, the other Amazon. And this love is no joke; for at p. 134, iii., meditating upon "her great virtues" (and we will add, her political economy) he writes a letter offering her his hand; and at this time (what time? why, post time to be sure) "his resolution was so firm, and the business was of such importance" that, lest Major Socrates should intercept his letter, he carries it himself to the office. But, sixthly, see what the resolutions of men are! In the very next chapter, and when time has advanced only by ten pages (but unfortunately after the letter-bags were made up), Wilhelm finds himself furiously in love with a friend of Theresa's; not that he has seen her since post-time, but he has been reminded of her: this

lady is Natalia, and turns out to be "the Amazon." No sooner has he a prospect of seeing her than "all the glories of the sky," he vows, "are as nothing to the moment which he looks for." In the next page (145), this moment arrives; Wilhelm reaches the house where she lives; on entering, "finds it the most *earnest* and (as he almost felt) the holiest place which he had ever trod;" on going up stairs to the drawing-room is obliged to kneel down "to get a moment's breathing time;" can scarcely raise himself again; and upon actual introduction to the divinity, "falls upon his knee, seizes her hand, and kisses it with unbounded rapture." What's to be done now, Mr. Meister? Pity you had not known this the night before, or had intrusted your letter to Socrates, or had seen some verses we could have sent you from England—

> "'Tis good to be merry and wise,
> 'Tis good to be honest and true;
> 'Tis good to be off with the old love,
> Before you be on with the new."

Matters begin to look black, especially as Theresa accepts his offer; and (as though Satan himself had a plot against him) in consequence of that very visit to Natalia which made him pray that she would not. "I hope you will be grateful," says the new love: "for she (viz., the old love) asked me for advice; and as it happened that you were here just then, I was enabled to destroy the few scruples which my friend still entertained." Here's delectable news. A man receives a letter from a lady who has had "her scruples"—accepting him nevertheless, but begging permission "at times to bestow a cordial thought upon her former friend" (Lothario to wit): in return for which she "will press his child (by a former mother) to her heart." such a letter he receives from one Amazon; "when with

terror he discovers in his heart most vivid traces of an inclination" for another Amazon. A man can't marry two Amazons. Well, thank Heaven ! it's no scrape of ours. A German wit has brought us all into it ; and a German *dénouement* shall help us all out. *Le voici !* There are two Amazons, the reader knows. Good : now one of these is *ci-devant* sweetheart to Lothario, the other his sister. What may prevent therefore that Meister shall have the sister, and Lothario (according to Horace's arrangement with Lydia) his old sweetheart ? Nothing but this sweetheart's impatience, who (p. 184, iii.) "dreads that she shall lose *him*" (Meister) "and not regain Lothario ;" *i.e.*, between two chairs, &c., and as Meister will not come to her, though she insists upon it in letter after letter, she comes to Meister ; determined to "hold him fast" (p. 184, iii.) O Amazon of little faith ! put your trust in Mr. Goethe, and he will deliver you ! This he does by a *coup de théâtre.* That lady whose passions had carried her into the south of France, had bestowed some of her favours upon Lothario : but she is reputed the mother of Theresa ; and hence had arisen the separation between Theresa and Lothario. This maternal person however is suddenly discovered NOT to be the mother of Theresa : the road is thus opened to a general winding up of the whole concern ; and the novel, as we said before, hastens to its close amid a grand *bravura* of kissing and catch-match-making. In the general row, even old Major Socrates catches a wife ; and a young one* too, though probably enough we fear a Xantippe.

* This young lady we overlooked in the general muster : her name is Lydia : and her little history is that she had first of all set her cap at Lothario and succeeded in bringing him to her feet ; secondly, had been pushed aside to make room for Theresa ; thirdly, had forced herself into Lothario's house and bedroom under the pretext of nurs-

Thus we have made Mr. von Goethe's novel speak for itself. And, whatever impression it may leave on the reader's mind, let it be charged upon the composer. If that impression is one of entire disgust, let it not be forgotten that it belongs exclusively to Mr. Goethe. The music is his : we have but arranged the concert, and led in the orchestra.

Even thus qualified, however, the task is not to us an agreeable one : our practice is to turn away our eyes from whatsoever we are compelled to loath or to disdain ; and to leave all that dishonours human nature to travel on its natural road to shame and oblivion. If in this instance we depart from that maxim, it is in consideration of the rank which the author has obtained elsewhere, and through his partisans is struggling for in this country. Without the passport of an eminent name, Wilhelm Meister is a safe book ; but backed in that way the dullest books are floated into popularity (thousands echoing their praise, who are not aware of the matter they contain) : and thus even such books become influential and are brought within the remark of Cicero (*De Legg.* lib. 3.) on the mischief done by profligate men of rank : "Quod non solum vitia concipiunt, sed ea infundunt in civitatem ; neque solum obsunt quia ipsi corrumpuntur, sed quia corrumpunt ; plusque exemplo quam peccato nocent."

ing him when wounded ; but fourthly, had been fairly ejected from both house and bedroom by a stratagem in which "our friend" in the character of toad-eater takes a most ungentlemanly part.

LESSING.

For the last fifty years, or perhaps we may say from the beginning of the present century, there has been a growing interest amongst us in the German literature. This interest has followed a direction, which upon the whole cannot be regarded as happy, having settled almost exclusively on the poets, in whom, as a class, it may be boldly said that the originality and the strength of the German mind are *not* revealed. For these we must look to the Prose Authors, who in general have neither written under the constraint of foreign models, nor sought to manifest their emancipation from that constraint by the monstrous, or the blank affectations of caprice.

From the German prose writers, therefore, of the classical rank, I purpose to present the English reader with a specimen or more; in selecting which I shall guide myself by this law, that on the one hand any such specimen shall be fitted for a general, and not a merely German interest; and, on the other hand, that it shall express the characteristic power of the author. I begin with Lessing, as the restorer and modern father of the German literature.

Lessing was born in January 1729, and died in February 1781. He may be said, therefore, to have begun his career precisely at the middle of the last century. At this

time the German literature was sunk in meanness and barbarism. Leibnitz, who might have exalted the national mind, had been dead little more than forty years: but he had no right to expect any peculiar influence over the German intellect, not having written at all in the German language; and Wolf, who *had*, was too much of a merely scholastic writer, and had besides too little that was properly his own, except his systematic method, to impress any deep sense of excellence, strictly national, upon the popular mind. Wanting all domestic models, and having no excitement from the events of that age, or the encouragement of the native princes, the German literature had fallen into a state of pitiable torpor, and exhibited, in the hands of Gottsched and his followers, a base travesty of Parisian levity, from which all spirit had evaporated, and alloyed in its transfusion with the quintessence of German coarseness. Against the French influence some stand had been made by Bodmer, but with little effect that could have reached a second generation. The intention was praiseworthy; but there was in Bodmer and his immediate party a radical want of original power.

Such was the inheritance to which Lessing succeeded. And, though it is difficult in any great intellectual revolution to measure the ratio of each individual contribution, still there can be no hesitation in ascribing to Lessing personally by far the largest share in awakening the frozen activities of the German mind; both because this effect followed so immediately in the wake of his earliest exertions, and because the direction which he impressed upon those exertions, was *à priori* so well adapted to that effect. What he did, was to apply philosophy—by which I would be understood to mean, in a large sense, the science of grounds and principles—to literature and the fine arts; an idea

which expresses accurately what the Grecians meant by criticism. Lessing, who had in all things a Grecian eye, here also realized the Grecian ideal. He became the founder of criticism for Germany; and by the very idea of criticism, under this extension of it, he secured the combined advantages of a popular and a scientific interest. The English reader will make a tolerably just estimate of Lessing's rank in German literature, if he classes him, as to *degree* of influence, with Dr. Johnson. Lessing and Dr. Johnson presided over the literature of their several countries precisely at the same period; and it is a remarkable proof, by the way, of the imperfect literary organization of Europe at that time, that neither ever heard of the other. In the *kind* of their influence, there was, however, little resemblance between the two, as indeed there was little in common between them as to the composition of their minds or their attainments, more than that both were well-built scholars, and both excelled in the application of a vigorous logic; Lessing to art, Dr. Johnson to the opinions or prejudices of life, and both of them to literature. A more accurate parallel as to the *kind* of his pretensions, lies between Lessing and Lord Shaftesbury.* Each had the same sensibility to the excellencies of art, and applied it especially to the antique; insomuch, that he who reads Lord Shaftesbury's Judgment of Hercules, might suppose himself to be reading the Laocoon of Lessing; and not there only, but scattered over the works of Lord Shaftesbury, are many just views, or undeveloped glimpses of truth,

* It is a striking proof of the ignorance in which most of us were content to live as regards the *history* of our very complex literature, that thirty years ago a most distinguished literary journal did solemnly confound our great English Chancellor, that wild Orson of a man, with Shaftesbury, author of *The Characteristics*, his *grandson*,

on the principles of art. Both had a strong bias to religious scepticism, which for Lessing, who fell upon times when a general ferment of opinions began to unsettle the human mind, and amongst a people who are always indulgent to that sort of license, had no bad consequence; but which for Lord Shaftesbury, at home at least, has gradually had the effect of degrading him below the rank which he once held, and ought still to hold, in the literature of the country. Both were elegant writers, with a high standard of excellence in the art of composition, and careful that their own style should be wrought up to that ideal. In one point the parallel might be expected to fail. The age of Lord Shaftesbury was not the age of learning in his rank. Latin, as we know from Bishop Burnet and others, was then thought sufficient for the aristocracy of England; but Lord Shaftesbury had been educated in the house of his grandfather, the Chancellor, and had been taught both Greek and Latin by a peculiar method, which gave him an unusual command of both literatures. Either this accomplishment, however, from the pleasurable sense of power which it gave, or else the original constitution of Lord Shaftesbury's mind, had one unfortunate result for the comprehensiveness of his taste, by carrying it too exclusively to the classical models of antiquity. There exist passages in his writings, which show that Milton, and even Shakspere, by mere blank power of passion, or absolute weight of thought, had sometimes coerced and awed him into sympathy; but he revolted from the *form* in which their conceptions were clothed. No one had ever suggested in that day, that the modern or Christian poetry, and the poetry of the antique, had each its separate law and character. Either, tried by the standard of the other, of necessity appeared to be imperfect; and as Lord Shaftesbury thought it a matter of

course to try the modern by the ancient, he became unjust* in a puerile degree to the magnificent literature of his own country. He was in fact what in German is called *einseitig*, or one-sided, right in one aspect; but, from the limitation of his view, wrong in every other. Here is a second ground of this noble author's present unpopularity; his own injustice to others has recoiled in the same shape upon himself. Far different in this respect from Lord Shaftesbury's, wiser and more comprehensive, was the taste of Lessing; and here the parallel between them fails. Yet Lessing might have had some colour of reason for despising modern literature; that of his own country, at the time when he commenced his career, presented little but ruins from a forgotten age, and rubbish from his own; and as to the French, in that department of it which is made the national glory, Lessing hated it "with an intolerant scorn;" and "it was his great right to do so;" for, precisely in that department, it raised itself into hostility with all other modern literature, and into presumptuous rivalry with the Grecian; and these were pretensions, of which nobody knew the hollowness† so entirely as Lessing. But with all this undeniable food for his cynical humour, a humour by the way which he had in common with Lord Shaftesbury,

* Precisely the same blunder was made by Winkelmann with respect to Virgil, and was exposed (as the reader will find at the beginning of the Laocoon) by Lessing. Tried by the statue, the poem appeared to be wrong, as the statue might if tried by the poem; but Lessing, by suggesting that poetry and sculpture might have their several laws and principles, has exposed the fallacy and justified Virgil.

† On this subject see the *Dramaturgie* of Lessing, occasional glances in the Laocoon, &c. The hostility of the French theatre to the English and Spanish was obvious; but Lessing was the first that detected its virtual hostility to the Grecian.

Lessing was too noble himself to refuse his sympathy to the really noble, in whatsoever form embodied. His acquaintance with the European literature was extensive; and this had taught him, that whilst one literature (as the French) might, under a poor outside mimicry of the antique, conceal the deadliest hostility to its vital purposes, another (as the English) might virtually coincide with it in the supreme principles of nature to which both appeal, though pursuing its common end under a different law of art. The English and the Grecian theatre differ as species and species in nature; the French and the Grecian as a true and a monstrous birth in the same species.

From this mention of the English theatre, it will be inferred that Lessing had paid some attention to our literature. He had; nor was there anything valuable in European literature to which he had not. In fact his reading was too extensive; since in some degree, as he himself complains in one of his letters, it had hurt the spring and elasticity of his thoughts. Frederick Schlegel, in the introduction which he has prefixed to a little selection, in three volumes, from the works of Lessing (*Lessings Geist aus seinen Schriften*) on this subject, gives us a slight sketch of his studies, which, as it illustrates one or two other particulars insisted on in the comparison between him and Lord Shaftesbury, I will here extract.

" Through all the periods of Lessing's life, we have occasion to notice in him the spirit of a Polyhistor, and a lively curiosity about everything possessing, in the remotest way, any relation to literature, though it were but in that class of subjects which are interesting to the regular literator or blackletter bibliomane, simply because they once *have* been interesting. We notice also with pleasure, the traces which are now and then apparent of the peculiar and

anxious attention which he paid to the German language, and an intimacy with its ancient monuments, which even now is rare, and in those days was much rarer. At an early stage of his career he had written a large commentary on the *Heldenbuch*, which, it is greatly to be lamented, has been lost; and later in life, and under the pressure of very different engagements, the epic romances of the *Saint Graal* and of the *Round Table* furnished him with favourite subjects of research. In short, the mind of Lessing was not cribbed and cabined within the narrow sphere of others amongst the learned, who are critics only in Latin and Greek, but in every other literature wholly at a loss. Lessing, on the contrary, handled every subject in a critical spirit; philosophy and theology not less than poetry and antiquities. Classical themes he treated with the popular grace and elegance which are usually restricted to discussions about the modern literature; and that again he examined with a rigour and precision which formerly were deemed unnecessary, except in the investigation of the antique. He studied, as I have said, the old domestic literature, and yet was sufficiently acquainted with the foreign literature of later growth—the English, for instance, up to the period of the French school,* and next to that the Italian and Spanish—to point out the path accurately into which a student should strike, and to direct the choice of his studies. Comprehensive however, as was the range of his research, the criticism which he built upon it is thoroughly popular in its style, and universally applicable. When a philologist of prodigious compass, like Sir William Jones, pursues the web of languages through the chain of

* The *French* school (meaning an Anglo-French school in England, which is a pure childish chimera).

their affinities up to their origin; when a Wolf [Schlegel means Wolf the commentator on Homer, &c.], through the labyrinth of prejudice, doubt, and misconstruction of facts obscured or overcharged, and the disguises or absolute falsifications of time, clears his road to the source and true genesis of Grecian art in its oldest monuments; in the nature of things it is impossible that more than a few can take part in such investigations. Nor is it necessary there should. Enough if every age produce two or three critics of this esoteric class, with here and there a reader to understand them. But the more popular spirit of Lessing's criticism finds its proper field within the circle of the universally intelligible; a spirit of investigation so free and liberal, everywhere struggling after just ideas of art, everywhere rigorous and uncompromising, yet at the same time so ductile and quick in sympathy, ought to be diffused over the whole surface of literature; for literature presents nothing so great, nor anything so apparently trivial, to which it is not applicable.

"For Germany, above all, this were devoutly to be wished. We are a learned people—that praise is denied us by nobody—and if we neglect to lay a foundation for our literature—a literature as yet but in expectancy and reversion—by the substratum of a learned spirit of criticism, on the model of Lessing's, it will not be long, I fear, before we shall lose the small stock of what is excellent that we have hitherto accumulated."

I have fixed upon the Laocoon, as the best fitted for my purpose, of any specimen that could have been chosen from the voluminous works of Lessing. It is perhaps the most characteristic of his mind; and it has this advantage for the general reader, that whilst the subject is one of popular

interest, no great demand is made upon him for continuous attention,—every section, though connected with the rest, being tolerably complete in itself, and separately intelligible. By the quality also of its arguments, and of the principles unfolded, the Laocoon is sufficiently fitted for popularity; for whilst they are all strikingly acute, they presume no previous knowledge in the reader of the kind which he is there seeking. In the works of Lessing, as a whole, there is one defect which has often been complained of, viz., that his philosophy is fragmentary, too much restrained to particular applications, and incapable of combination or perfect synthesis; another feature, by the way, in Lessing, which connects him with Lord Shaftesbury; for *his* philosophy also is scattered and disjointed, delivered by fits and starts, and with many a vast hiatus. Both of them, in fact, had a leaning to a sceptical (that is, a negative) philosophy, rather than a positive philosophy of construction. Meantime, this particular defect is less felt in the Laocoon than elsewhere; and for this reason, Schlegel has remarked (or rather Kant, for it is his remark originally), that merely to clear up the boundaries of the different species, which might seem a negative service, yields the greatest positive uses for the development of each species in its whole individualities. Now this is done in the Laocoon; and it will be shown in the notes that some errors, which have arisen in England, would at once have been forestalled by the principles of this essay.

LAOCOON.

An Essay on the Fine Arts and their Limits. From the German of Lessing. With Notes by the Translator.

SECTION I.

What is the most prominent characteristic of the Grecian masterpieces in painting and in sculpture?

It will be found, according to Winkelmann, in majestic composure of attitude and expression. "As the ocean," says he, "in its lower strata remains for ever at rest, let its surface be as agitated as it may, even so the expression in the figures of the Greeks, under the uttermost tumult of passion, indicates a profound tranquillity of soul. Such a tranquillity is shadowed forth in the face of the Laocoon though in extremities of suffering. And not merely in the face. Every muscle is instinct with anguish; torture is made palpable to the spectator in the dire contractions below the bust; yet this suffering does not express itself by any frenzy in the countenance, or distraction in the attitude. No hideous shriek is uttered, as in the poetic Laocoon of Virgil; the opening of the mouth is not enough to allow of this, nor in fact of any louder voice, as Sadolet notices, than the stifled sigh of anguish. Through the whole structure of the figure bodily pain and grandeur of soul are distributed in equal measure, and are balanced into a noble antagonism with each other. Laocoon suffers, but he suffers like the Philoctetes of Sophocles. His misery pierces our hearts; but the presiding sentiment after all is a wish that we could support the situation of so miserable a being with the fortitude of so noble a one."

This remark of Winkelmann's, as to the fundamental

part of it, that the suffering does not impress itself on the face of Laocoon, with that frantic agitation which might have been looked for from its violence, is perfectly just. And it is indisputable, that in this very point, in which a half-judge would pronounce the artist to have fallen below nature, and to have missed the true pathos of bodily pain, lies in fact the triumph of his wisdom. Thus far I assent: and it is simply as to the grounds which Winkelmann assigns for this wisdom of the artist, and as to the universality of the rule which he would derive from these grounds, that I venture to disagree with him. Undoubtedly I was staggered at first by the oblique censure of Virgil, and by the comparison with Philoctetes. From this point I will start, and will deliver my thoughts in the order of their actual development.

SECTION II.

"Laocoon suffers; but he suffers like the Philoctetes of Sophocles." And how is *that?* Strange that the character of his suffering should have impressed us so differently. The complaints, outcries, and savage execrations with which the torments of Philoctetes had filled the camp and disturbed the sanctity of the sacrifices, rang with no less hideous clamour through the desert island; and these, indeed, it was that had banished him to that solitude. Dread accents of rage, of anguish, of despair! which the Athenian theatre re-echoed in the mimic representation of the poet. It has been remarked that the third act of this drama is shorter than the rest. And why? Because, say the critics, little stress was laid by the ancients upon the equalization of the acts. This I admit: but I should prefer any other instance in support of it to the one before us. For the truth is, that the uninterrupted expressions of pain in

this act of the Philoctetes, the abrupt ejaculation of ἀ, ἀ, ὤ μοι, μοι, ἀτταται, &c., with which it is crowded, must have demanded in the stage declamation, a prolonged volume of emphasis and of cadences very different from those which belong to continuous recitation: and hence, when represented, doubtless this act would fill as long a space of time as the rest. Measured by the eye upon paper it has a shortness, which it could not have had to an audience.

Crying is the natural expression of bodily pain. The Homeric warriors, gods or men, fell to the ground when wounded, not seldom with loud outcries. Venus, on finding her skin raised by the point of a spear, utters a loud shriek; and that this is not meant by the poet as any expression of the effeminacy appropriate to her in the character of goddess of pleasure, but as the universal tribute to the claims of suffering nature, appears from this, that the iron-hearted Mars, when pierced by the lance of Diomed, shrieks as hideously as ten thousand men in distraction, so that both armies are thrown into consternation.

Much as Homer may otherwise have exalted the heroic standard, yet invariably in cases of bodily pain, or of insulted honour, when the question is about the expression of these feelings—whether by crying, by tears, or by abusive words, his heroes remain faithful to their merely human nature. In their actions they are beings of a higher order; in their feelings very men. We* Europeans, I am well

* Lessing is here upon untenable ground: the ancient and modern world are not under a different law in this respect; still less are we Europeans, as Lessing may be understood to mean, opposed to the rest of the world, and to the great rule of nature in our mode of feeling on this matter. Goth, Scythian, American Indian, have all alike placed the point of honour in the suppression of any feeling whatsoever of a purely personal or selfish nature, as physical suffering must necessarily be. It is the Greeks who are the exceptions, not we: and

aware, with our modern refinement and decorum, are better skilled in the government of our eyes and our tongue. Passive courage has with us displaced the courage of action, which characterized the raw ages of the early world. And this distinction we inherit even from our rude ancestors. Obstinately to dissemble pain and to stifle its expression—to face the stroke of death with steadfast eye—to expire laughing amidst the pangs of adders' poison, and to disdain all lamentations for the loss of the dearest friend,—these are the characteristics of the old Northern heroism.

Not so with the Grecian! *He* gave a loose to the expression of his pain or his grief, and felt ashamed for none of his human infirmities; with this one restriction, however, that they were never allowed to interfere with him in the path of honour, or in the fulfilment of his duties. A triumph over his nature, for which he was indebted entirely to moral principle; whereas in the barbarian, it arose from the mere callousness of uncultivated sensibility. On this subject there is a characteristic trait in a passage of the Iliad, which* I am surprised that the critics have overlooked. The hostile armies, having agreed to an armistice, are occupied in burning their dead; a ceremony which, on both sides, is conducted not without tears. Priam, however, forbids his Trojans to weep. Now, why is it that Agamemnon does not issue a similar order to the Greeks? The poet would here intimate to us that it is only the cultivated Greek that can reconcile the martial character with the tenderness of grief; whereas the un-

even amongst them, not all (*e.g.*, the Spartans), nor in every age. As to the Homeric Greeks, they are downright children. The case of the funeral lamentation, however, is not in point: for this is a case of the *social* affections, to the expression of which it is true that nations are more or less indulgent as they are more or less cultivated.

cultured Trojan, to attain the distinctions of a warrior, must first of all stifle his human affection.

It is remarkable, that amongst the few tragedies which have come down to us from the Grecian theatre, there are two * which found no small part of the distress upon the bodily sufferings of the hero—the Philoctetes already noticed, and the dying Hercules: him also (in his Trachiniæ) Sophocles represents as weeping, wailing, and shrieking. There is even a Laocoon amongst the lost tragedies of Sophocles; and, though it is impossible, from the slight notices of this drama in the old *literators*, to come to any conclusion about the way in which it was treated, still I am persuaded that Laocoon cannot have been portrayed as more stoical than Hercules or Philoctetes. Stoicism in every form is undramatic: and our sympathy with suffering is always commensurate with the expression of it in the object of the interest.

And now comes my inference. If it be true that audible

* Every reader will recollect a third, the Prometheus of Æschylus. That Lessing should have omitted this, cannot be regarded as an oversight, but rather as the act of a special pleader, who felt that it would stand in the way of his theory. It must not be objected that Prometheus is the hero of a mysterious mythus, with a proportionate exaltation of the human character: for so was Hercules. Undoubtedly it must be granted that the enduring and (so to speak) monumental suffering of Prometheus, demanded on principles of proportion, a Titanic stability of fortitude, having no relation to time and the transitory agitations of passion: so that even Sophocles might, upon a suggestion of good taste, *invitâ Minervâ*, have treated this subject differently. But, after all, the main ground of difference between the two poets lies in this, that Æschylus had a profound sympathy with the grandeurs of nature and of human nature, which Sophocles had not. Now, between two extremes (as in the management of this case they were), it is not open to Lessing to assume either as the representative Grecian mind.

crying and shrieking, as an expression of bodily pain, is not incompatible (on the ancient Greek notion) with grandeur of soul,—in that case, Winkelmann cannot possibly be right in supposing such a grandeur in the sculptor's conception of the Laocoon to have stood in the way of the natural expression of the agony which invests the situation; and we are now to seek for some other reason why, in this instance, he has departed from his rival the poet, who has not scrupled deliberately to express this trait of the situation.

SECTION III.

There is a story which ascribes to the passion of love the first essays in the fine arts: this story, no matter whether a fable or a genuine tradition, is so far true in a philosophic sense, that undoubtedly this passion was the presiding influence under which the great masters composed, and which, in respect to the art of painting in particular, dictated the Grecian theory of its purpose and limits. For the wise Greek confined it within the narrowest bounds and refused to paint anything but the Beautiful, and not that even when it belonged to a lower order; beauty, less than absolute, never except by accident furnished an object to the Grecian artist; at most, it might furnish him a casual study or an amusement. It was the ambition of the Grecian painter that his works should enchant by the mere perfection of the object which they presented apart from his own workmanship; and his pride was too elevated to stoop to gratify the humble taste for a likeness skilfully caught, or to draw attention to himself by the sense of a difficulty overcome.

"Who would choose to paint thee," says an old epigrammatist, addressing a very deformed man;—"who would

choose to paint thee, whom no man would choose to look at?" But many a modern artist would say—"No matter how deformed you may be, I will paint you. Grant that no man would willingly look at you,—what of that? Every man will gladly look at my picture, not indeed as exhibiting your person, but as exhibiting my art in reflecting so faithful an image of an object so disgusting."

Meantime it cannot be denied that this propensity to an ostentatious display of address and sleight of hand, unennobled by any value in the object, has too deep a foundation in our nature to remain wholly inert under any condition of the public taste; and accordingly, even Greece produced her Pauson, who exercised his art exclusively upon the defects of the human form, through all its varieties of disproportion or distortion; and her Pyreicus, who painted such subjects as the ass, the whole tribe of culinary vegetables, dirty work-shops, &c., with all the zeal of a Flemish artist. But these painters suffered the penalty due to this degradation of their art—the first in squalid poverty and both in the public disrespect.

Even the civil power itself was thought in Greece to be not unworthily employed in confining the artist within his proper sphere; and a Theban law, as is well known, punished the representation of deformity. We laugh when we hear of this; but we laugh unwisely. Undoubtedly the laws have no pretensions to any control over the motions of science; for the object of science is truth; and *that* is indispensable.* But the object of the fine arts is pleasure,

* It is hardly possible to crowd together into one sentence a greater amount of error, or error of a more dangerous quality. First, the right of the State to interfere with the Fine Arts, is asserted upon the ground that they can be dispensed with, *i.e.*, that they are of no important use; which ground is abandoned in the next sentence,

which is *not* indispensable. And therefore it must depend altogether upon the choice of the lawgiver, to determine what kind of pleasure shall be allowed, and of each several kind what proportion. That class of the arts, in particular, which deals with forms, besides its inevitable influences upon the national character, is capable of leading to one result, which demands the special regard of the laws. The female imagination, impressed by the daily spectacle of grace and power displayed in the ideal beauty of pictures and statues, would gradually exalt the standard of the national form. Whereas with us moderns, the maternal imagination seems never to receive any effectual impressions but in the direction of the monstrous.

And hence I derive a notion which enables me to detect a latent truth in some old stories which have hitherto passed for fables. Six ladies of antiquity, viz., the mothers of Aristomenes, of Aristodamas, of Alexander the Great, of

where important influences upon the national condition are ascribed to one class of the Fine Arts, and more than this can hardly be involved in the character of "*indispensable*," as attached to the sciences. Secondly, apart from this contradiction, the following dilemma arises; the Fine Arts have, or have not, important results for human happiness. In the first case, it is dangerous to concede a right of interference with them to the State (that is, a right to cripple or defeat them): in the second case, it is vexatious. The sole pretence, indeed, for such a claim, viz., that it cannot interfere with any important interests, because the Arts are no ways essential to the general welfare, carries with it a confession that any interference would be frivolous and impertinent. The moment that such an act can be shown to be safe, it will also appear to be without use or motive. Thirdly, unless the government are to *mis*direct the arts, it will be reduced to the following alternatives; either its members must dedicate themselves to that particular study, in which case they abandon their own appropriate functions; or they must surrender themselves to the guidance of a body of artists; in which case, besides the indecorum of making the State a tool for private intrigues, it is not in fact

Scipio, of Augustus, and the Emperor Galerius, all had the same dream during pregnancy, the main circumstance of which was that they had an adulterous commerce with a serpent. Now, undoubtedly, there must have been some reason why the fancy in these cases had uniformly settled upon a serpent; and I explain it thus. The serpent was a symbol of divinity; and the beautiful statues or pictures of a Bacchus, an Apollo, a Mercury, a Hercules, were rarely without this symbol. And thus it naturally happened, that the fancy of these ladies having banqueted in the day-time on the marvellous perfections of the youthful God, reproduced in the confusion of dreams this symbolic image as an associated circumstance.

But this by the way. What I wished to insist on is—that amongst the ancients Beauty was the presiding law of those arts which are occupied with Form. And this once established, it follows, that to the supreme object of Beauty,

the government which prescribes rules to the arts, but one faction of artists through the government prescribing rules to another. Fourthly, it is not true that Science is in any other or higher sense "indispensable" than the Arts; the fact is, that the gifts of Science would be a most dangerous possession for any nation which was not guided in the use of them by a moral culture derived from manners, institutions, and the arts. Fifthly, the fundamental error lies in affirming the final object of the Fine Arts to be pleasure. Every man, however, would shrink from describing Æschylus or Phidias, Milton or Michael Angelo, as working for a common end with a tumbler or a rope-dancer. "No!" he would say, "the pleasure from the Fine Arts is ennobling, which the other is not." Precisely so: and hence it appears that not pleasure, but the sense of power and the illimitable, incarnated as it were in pleasure, is the true object of the Fine Arts; and their final purpose, therefore, as truly as that of Science, and much more directly, the exaltation of our human nature; which, being the very highest conceivable purpose of man, is least of all a fit subject for the caprices or experiments of the scoundrel magistrate.

every collateral object in these arts must be sacrificed at once where it cannot be brought into reconciliation, and must, in any case, be subordinated.

Let me pause a moment to explain myself. There are certain modes of passion, and degrees of passion, which cannot express themselves on the countenance but by hideously disfiguring it, and which throw the whole person into such constrained attitudes, that all the beautiful lines which define its outline in a state of repose, utterly vanish. Now, from these passions the ancient artists either abstained altogether, or depressed them to a lower key, in which they might be so modulated as not to disturb the general beauty. Frenzy and despair, for instance, were not allowed to disfigure their pure creations. Anger they lowered into severity. By the poet, indeed, Jupiter might be exhibited in wrath and launching the thunderbolt; but the artist tranquillized this stormy passion into a majestic austerity. Anguish, in like manner, was tempered into sorrow.

But suppose such temperaments to be impracticable from the circumstances, how did the artist deliver himself from his embarrassment so as to express a due submission to the general law of his art (that is to say, the beautiful), and yet at the same time to meet the necessities of the particular case? We have a lesson upon this point from Timanthes. He, in his celebrated picture of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia, had depicted the several bystanders, each with his appropriate expression of sympathy through the whole scale of grief; but, coming at last to the father, whose features should naturally have exhibited the passion in its extremity, what did he do? He threw a veil over his face. The story is well known; and many fine things have been said upon it. One critic thinks that the painter had exhausted his whole physiognomy of woe, and despaired of

throwing a crowning expression into the countenance of the father. This solution is founded therefore on the *number* of the bystanders, and the consequent extent of the scale. But another is of opinion, that, apart from that consideration, and supposing no comparison at all, paternal grief is absolutely and *per se* inexpressible; and that this is what the painter designed to intimate. For my part I see no such thing: I do not admit the inexpressibility of paternal grief, neither in its degree (according to the first opinion), nor in its kind (according to the second). I deny the supposed impossibility of adequately representing it, whether it respects the aptitudes of the arts to allow of this, or the resources of the artist for effecting it. So far from *that*, exactly as any passion grows intense, the traits of the countenance which correspond to it will deepen in emphasis and characteristic meaning; and just in that degree will the artist find the deepest passion easiest to express. The true solution is, that Timanthes is here paying homage to the limits which the Graces had prescribed to his art. *That* grief, which belonged to Agamemnon as a father, could not (he was aware) express itself but by distortions of countenance that must be in the highest degree repulsive. Up to a certain point the expression could co-exist with dignity and beauty; and so far he carried it. Beyond this the expression became shocking in proportion as it was true to nature. Wholly to have omitted the paternal grief, or to have depressed its tone, would have been the painter's choice, had either been left free to him by the plan of his composition: not being so, what remained for him but to throw a veil over that which could not be expressed by the art of painting in consistency with its own end? In short, the veiling of Agamemnon is a sacrifice on the part of the painter to the principle of beauty; and is not

to be interpreted as a dexterous evasion of the artist's difficulties for the sake of achieving indirectly an expression beyond the powers of the art itself to have reached; but on the contrary, as an example of submission to the primary law of the art, which law is Beauty.

Now then let all this be applied to the Laocoon, and the reason which I am investigating will be apparent. The artist was straining after the highest possible beauty, which, however, could not be reconciled with the circumstances of bodily pain exhibited in any form of degrading violence. This therefore it became necessary to moderate; shrieking was to be tamed into sighing; not, however, as though shrieking betrayed an ignoble soul, but because it convulsed and distorted the features. For conceive the mouth of the Laocoon to be opened so as to utter a shriek, and in a moment what a transfiguration! A countenance which had commanded our sympathy by the union of beauty and suffering which it embodied, is suddenly become hateful to us from the disgust associated with the blank aspect of pain unexalted by some mode of bodily perfection in the sufferer. Indeed, setting aside the hideous distortion which it impresses on the other parts of the face, a wide opening of the mouth is in itself a blot upon the harmonies of a painting, and in sculpture is such a descent into bathos as must always be in the last degree revolting. Accordingly, no artist, even in the decay of the arts, has ever figured the most uncultured of barbarians, though in the moment of mortal panic, with the victor's sword at his throat, as shrieking open-mouthed.

Let me add, that this depression of extreme bodily anguish to a lower tone of feeling, is unquestionably countenanced by several ancient works of art. The Hercules in the poisoned shift, from the hand of an anonymous old master,

was not modelled upon the Hercules of the Trachiniæ;* he was exhibited rather in gloom than in distraction; whereas, in the drama of Sophocles, he utters shrieks so piercing, that they are reverberated from the Locrian rocks and the promontories of Eubœa. The Philoctetes also of Pythagoras Leontinus is described as communicating a sympathetic pain to the spectator; an effect which would assuredly have been defeated by the slightest trace of the horrific.

SECTION IV.

But Art, it will be said, in modern ages, has released itself from the narrow limits of the antique. Its imitations now are co-extensive with the sphere of visible nature, of which the Beautiful forms but a small part. Truth and Expression, it is alleged, now constitute its supreme law; and as Nature is herself for ever sacrificing beauty to higher purposes, the artist also must now pursue it in submission to what is become the general and determining principle of his art. Enough, that by Truth and Expression the hideous of nature is transformed into the beautiful of art.

Suppose now, that, leaving these notions for the present uncontested, we were to look out for some principle quite independent of *their* truth and falsehood (which principle, therefore, it is free for us to use without thereby begging the question), and suppose that, starting from this principle, we could derive from it the two following canons of judg-

* The *Trachinian women* composed the chorus which Sophocles brought forward in his dreadful tragedy on the dying Hercules. So that subsequently *The Trachiniæ* became the current name for this tragedy. *Dreadful*, I call it, because the semi-deity of Hercules did not (like that of Prometheus) protect him from Death. Hence the entire scenical movement, under the Death-Shirt of Nessus the Centaur, is felt to be the Apocalypse of Hand Dying in its last recesses.

ment; viz., that in the teeth of those objections (no matter whether otherwise true or false) the artist is bound,—

First, to prescribe certain limits to himself in expressing passion; and thus to acknowledge some law paramount even to the expression.

Secondly, never to select the expression from what may be called the *acme* or transcendent point of the action.

I think, then, that such a principle, as we are in search of, will be found in one circumstance, to which the imitations of Art are necessarily tied by its more physical conditions, and *that* is its punctual restriction to a single instant of time; which restriction alone seems to me quite sufficient to yield us the two canons above-mentioned.

Every process of Nature unfolds itself through a succession of phenomena. Now, if it be granted of the artist generally, that of all this moving series he can arrest as it were but so much as fills one instant of time, and with regard to the painter in particular, that even this insulated moment he can exhibit only under one single aspect or phasis, it then becomes evident that, in the selection of this single instant and of this single aspect, too much care cannot be taken that each shall be in the highest possible degree pregnant in its meaning; that is, shall yield the utmost range to the activities of the imagination. But in the whole evolution of a passion, there is no one stage which has less of this advantage than its highest. Beyond it there is nothing: and to present the last extremity to the eye, is in effect to put fetters on the fancy, and by denying it all possibility of rising above the sensible impression of the picture or statue, to throw its activities forcibly upon the weaker images which lie below that impression. Let Laocoon sigh, and the imagination may hear him shriek; but, if he shrieks, the imagination will not be able to advance

one step higher or lower without placing him in a more endurable, and therefore less interesting, situation. It must then represent him either in his earliest sigh, or resting from his agony in death.

So much for the second canon. Next, as respects the other, since art confers upon the moment which it selects the steadfastness of eternity, it must never undertake to express anything which is essentially evanescent.* All appearances in nature, which bear the character to our understanding of sudden birth and sudden extinction, and which by their very essence are fluxionary, become unnatural when fixed and petrified, as it were, into the

* "*Essentially evanescent:*" The reader must lay especial stress on the word *essentially*, because else Lessing will be chargeable with a capital error. For it is in the very antagonism between the transitory reality and the non-transitory image of it reproduced by Painting or Sculpture, that *one* main attraction of those arts is concealed. The shows of Nature, which we feel and know to be moving, unstable, and transitory, are by these arts arrested in a single moment of their passage, and frozen as it were into a motionless immortality. This truth has been admirably drawn into light, and finely illustrated, by Mr. Wordsworth, in a sonnet on the Art of Landscape-Painting; in which he insists upon it as the great secret of its power, that it bestows upon

"One brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest Eternity."

Now, in this there might seem at first glance to be some opposition between Mr. Wordsworth and Lessing; but all the illustrations of the sonnet show that there is not. For the case is this: In the succession of parts which make up any appearance in nature, either these parts simply repeat each other (as in the case of a man walking, a river flowing, &c.), or they unfold themselves through a cycle, in which each step effaces the preceding (as in the case of a gun exploding, where the flash is swallowed up by the smoke, the smoke effaced by its own dispersion, &c.) Now, the illustrations in Mr. Wordsworth's poem are all of the former class; as the party of travellers just entering the wood, but not permitted, by the good, considerate painter, absolutely to enter the wood, where they must be eternally hidden from us; so again with regard to the little boat, if

unchanging forms of art; and, no matter whether otherwise agreeable or terrific, inevitably become weaker and weaker in the impression the oftener they are contemplated. Pain, violent enough to extort shrieks, either soon remits, or else destroys the suffering subject. Here, then, is a reason why the sculptor could not have represented Laocoon as shrieking, even though it had been possible for him to do so, without disturbing the beauty, or though in *his* art it had been allowable to neglect it.

This canon was understood and acted on by Timomachus, who, amongst the ancient painters, seems most to have delighted in subjects of intense passion. Two of his most

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allowed to unmoor and go out a fishing, it might be lying hid for hours under the restless glory of the sun, but now we all see it

"For ever anchored in its rocky bed,"

and so on; where the continuous self-repeating nature of the impression, together with its indefinite duration, predispose the mind to contemplate it under a form of unity, one mode of which exists in the eternal *Now* of the painter and the sculptor. But in successions of the other class, where the parts are not fluent, as in a line, but angular, as it were, to each other, not homogeneous, but heterogeneous, not continuous but abrupt, the evanescence is *essential;* both because each part really *has*, in general, but a momentary existence, and still more because, all the parts being unlike, each is imperfect as a representative image of the whole process; whereas, in trains which repeat each other, the whole exists virtually in each part, and therefore reciprocally each part will be a perfect expression of the whole. Now, whatever is essentially imperfect, and waiting, as it were, for its complement, is thereby essentially evanescent, as it is only by vanishing that it makes room for this complement. Whilst objecting, therefore, to appearances *essentially* evanescent, as subjects for the artist, Lessing is by implication suggesting the same class from which Mr. Wordsworth has drawn his illustrations.

Spite of the length to which this note has run, I will trespass on the reader's patience for one moment longer, whilst I point his attention to two laws of taste, applied to the composition of epitaphs (in Mr. Wordsworth's Essay on that subject), as resting on the same general principle which Lessing is unfolding in the next; they are

celebrated pictures were the Ajax in Distraction, and the Medea. But, from the description which has come down to us of these pictures, it is evident that he has admirably combined an attention to both the canons laid down; having selected that point of the action in each case which rather suggested than represented its crisis or extremity, and that particular form of expression for the situation with which the sense of evanesence was not too powerfully connected, to make us revolt from the prolongation of it by art. The Medea was exhibited, not in the very act of murdering her children, but a few moments before, whilst the struggle was yet fervent between maternal love and

these: *first*, that all fanciful thoughts, and *secondly*, that all thoughts of unsubdued, gloomy, and unhopeful grief, are not less severely excluded from the Epitaph by just taste than by Christian feeling. For the very nature of the material in which such inscriptions are recorded, stone or marble, and the laborious process by which they are chiselled out, both point to a character of duration, with which everything slight, frail, or evanescent, is out of harmony. Now, a fanciful thought, however tender, has, by its very definition, this defect. For, being of necessity taken from a partial and oblique station (since, if it coincided with the central or absolute station of the reason, it would cease to be fanciful), such a thought can, at most, include but a side-glimpse of the truth: the mind submits to it for a moment, but immediately hurries on to some other thought, under the feeling that the flash and sudden gleam of colourable truth, being as frail as the resemblances in clouds, would, like *them*, unmould and "dislimn" itself (to use a Shakspearian word) under too steady and continued attention. As to the other class of thoughts, which express the agitations of inconsolable grief, no doubt, they are sufficiently condemned, even in point of taste, by the very character of the place where epitaphs are usually recorded; for this being dedicated to Christian hopes, should, in all consistency, impress a law of Christian resignation upon the memorials within its precincts; else why inscribe them *there?* But, apart from this objection, such thoughts are also condemned, on the principle of Lessing, as too evanescent. In the hands of a dramatic poet they are of great use; for there it is no blame to them that they are evanescent, since they make part,

jealousy. The issue is foreseen; already, by anticipation, we shudder at the image of the mother mastered by her murderous fury; and our imagination transports us far beyond any effect that could have been derived from the actual exhibition of this awful moment. And so little do we feel any offence at the eternity conferred by Art on the indecision of Medea, that on the contrary the mind submits to it gladly, and with a wish that the conflict had in reality been eternal, or so long, however, that time might have been allowed for reflection, and for the victorious reflux of maternal tenderness. This treatment of the subject has

or steps, in a natural process, the *whole* of which is given; and are effaced either by more tranquil sentiments, or by the catastrophe; so that no attempt is there made to give permanence to the evanescent. But in an Epitaph, from its monumental character, we look for an expression of feeling which is fitted to be acquiesced in as final. Now, upon general principles of human nature, we know that the turbulence of rebellious grief cannot be a final, or other than a transitory state of mind; and if it were otherwise in any particular case, we should be too much shocked to survey it with a pleasurable sympathy.

This is the place for introducing a most apposite illustration, which is the more interesting for having been a ground-work for much controversy. Sir Brooke Boothby, a Derbyshire baronet, more than fifty years ago lost a very lovely daughter, from eight to eleven years old. He and Lady Boothby were alike inconsolable for their loss: but such consolation, as might be possible, they endeavoured to draw from a memorial figure of their daughter executed in statuary marble; and Sir Brooke, who was a man of letters, not without considerable talent, briefly recorded the nature of their loss and its infinite extent, in the following English inscription:—

Upon this frail vessel the wretched Parents
Embarked the entire burthen of their hopes;
And the *wreck—was total!*

With the sentiment here expressed, and expressed in a Christian church, many people quarrelled; amongst whom was Wordsworth. Others, standing in the same circumstances of hopeless grief, justified the whole.

obtained for Timomachus the warmest applause, and a great pre-eminence over a brother painter, who had in these points departed from his discretion. This artist had been injudicious enough to exhibit Medea in the very transports of her murderous frenzy; and thus upon a thing as fugitive as a delirious dream, had conferred a monumental duration, which is shocking and revolting to nature. A Greek poet, accordingly, when censuring his conduct in these particulars, with just feeling apostrophizes the principal figure in this way—"Ha! Medea, is then thy thirst after thy children's blood unquenchable? Doth there rise up for ever another Jason and another Creusa, to sting thee into madness? If so," he adds, in indignation, "cursed be thou even in the painter's mimicry."

The management of the Ajax we may collect from the account of Philostratus. He was not represented in the height of his paroxysm, slaughtering the rams and the he-goats which he mistakes for his enemies; but in the state of exhaustion which succeeded to these feats, re-visited by reason, and meditating self-destruction. And this in strict meaning *is* the distracted Ajax; not that he is so now, but because we see his distraction expounded by its effects, and the enormity of it measured by the acuteness of his shame. The fury of the storm appears best after it is over, expressing itself by the wrecks and the ruins it has caused.

SECTION V.

I have argued that the sculptor, in setting limits to the expression of pain in the Laocoon, proceeded upon principle. On looking over the reasons by which this has been maintained, I find that they all resolve themselves into the peculiar constitution of his art, and its original and natural necessities. This being the case, it is scarcely possible that,

any one of these arguments should be applicable to the art of Poetry.

Without stopping to examine how far the poet can succeed in representing personal beauty, thus much is indisputable—that, since the whole immeasurable field of perfection in every mode is open to his art, that particular manifestation, or (to speak learnedly) that incarnation of the perfect which is called Beauty, can never be more than one amongst many resources (and those the slightest) by which he has it in his power to engage our interest for his characters. Least of all is it necessary in any single trait of description, not expressly designed for the sight, that the poet should address himself to that sense. When Virgil's Laocoon shrieks, who thinks of the wide opening of the mouth that takes place in that act, and of its ugliness? Enough that the expression, "*Clamores horrendos ad sidera tollit*," is a grand trait for the ear, be it what it may for the sight. And he that looks for a beautiful image in this place, has wholly missed the true effect designed by the poet.

In the next place, nothing obliges the poet (like the painter) to concentrate his picture into one punctual instant of time. Any action whatsoever he is at liberty to take up from its origin, and to conduct it through every stage to the conclusion. Each one of these stages, which would cost the painter a separate picture, is despatched by *him* in a single trait of description; and supposing this trait, separately considered, to be offensive, yet, by skilful position in respect to what precedes and follows, it may be so *medicated* (as it were) by the preparation of the one, and the reaction of the other, as to merge its peculiar and separate effect in the general impression.

Virgil, therefore, may be justified for departing from the sculptor in his treatment of the Laocoon. But Virgil is a

narrative poet; how far, then, will the benefit of *his* justification extend to the dramatic poet? It is one thing to tell us of a shriek, and another thing actually to re-produce this shriek in a mimic representation: and possibly it may be the duty of the Drama, as a sort of living art of Painting by means of actors, to bind itself more severely than other kinds of poetry to the laws of that art. In the representation of the theatre it will be urged that we no longer *fancy* that we are seeing and hearing a shrieking Philoctetes; we do actually see and hear him: and the nearer to the truth of nature that the mimetic art of the actor is in this instance carried, so much the more sensibly should our eyes and ears be offended; for it is undeniable that they are so, in the realities of nature, by all violent expressions of pain. Bodily pain above all is, in general, ill adapted to call forth the sympathy which is given to other modes of suffering. It presents to our imagination too little of distinct features, for the mere sight of it to impress us with a proportionate feeling. *Primâ facie*, therefore, it is not absolutely impossible that Sophocles, in representing his suffering heroes as weeping and wailing, may have violated a law of decorum, not arbitrary or fantastic, but grounded in the very nature of human emotions. The bystanders, it is clear, cannot possibly take as much interest in their sufferings as this clamorous uproar of ejaculation seems to call for. They will, therefore, appear to us, the spectators, comparatively cold: and yet, we cannot possibly regard their sympathy as other than the fit measure for our own. Add to this, that the actor can, with great difficulty, if at all, carry the expression of pain to the necessary point of illusion.

How plausible, how irrefragable, would many an objection drawn from theory appear, had not genius succeeded

in demonstrating its falsehood by mere blank argument of fact. None of the considerations alleged seems to be without some foundation; yet, for all that, the Philoctetes remains a *chef-d'œuvre* of the stage. The truth is, that one part of the objections glances wide of Sophocles; and with respect to the other, simply by managing the subject so as to throw it out of the level of their range, the poet has achieved beauties which the timid connoisseur, in the absence of such a model, could never have imagined to be possible.

Marvellously, indeed, has the poet succeeded in strengthening and exalting the idea of bodily pain. First of all, he selected for the ground of his interest a wound rather than an internal malady, however painful, as judging the former to be susceptible of a more impressive representation.* On this principle the internal fire which consumes

* This is surely a very questionable position. To many persons the sickness of Orestes, exhibited with so much pathetic effect by Euripides, will appear better adapted to scenical purposes than any wound whatsoever. But *that* sickness, it will be said, was not a natural sickness; it was exalted by its connexion with the dark powers who had inflicted it, and the awful nature of the guilt which had provoked it. True; but the wound of Philoctetes was also of a supernatural character, and ennobled by the wild grandeur of the Lernæan poison, independently of the poet's art; so that the com parison is not an unfair one. On the other hand, with respect to the case of Meleager, referred to in the next sentence, any comparison between that and the case of Philoctetes would be an unfair one, if it were not in fact nugatory; for the combustion of Meleager was to the full as much a wound as a constitutional disease. But, waiving this, the true reason why we should be little affected by a scenical Meleager is, that the supernatural in this instance rests upon the basis of magic—a basis as aërial and as little appealing to the profundities of our nature as the supernatural of a Fairy tale. Hence, if we are to take it with Lessing as a representative case of constitutional disease against wounds, it will be most unfair to oppose it to

Meleager, in fatal sympathy with the brand which his mother throws into the fire as a sacrifice to her sisterly wrath, would be less adapted to the illusions of the scene than a wound. Secondly, the wound of Philoctetes was a judgment from Heaven. A poison in which was more than a natural malignity, gnawed within the wound for ever; intervals there were none, except as regarded the extreme paroxysms; these had their stated periods, after which the miserable man regularly sank into a comatose sleep, in which nature rested from her agonies to restore him strength for treading the same round of torment again.

Dreadful, however, as were the bodily sufferings of his hero, Sophocles was sensible that these alone were not sufficient to sustain any remarkable degree of pity. With pain, therefore, he connected other evils; and these also taken sepa-

that of Philoctetes, in which, as a divine judgment inflicted through a physical agency, the supernatural rests upon the deep realities of our nature; for the notion of a "judgment" is common to all religions. In this respect, again, the Orestes is the fair counterpart of the Philoctetes as to the *quality* of the interest: So that, if it be equal or superior in the *degree*, the remark of Lessing is groundless. By the way, of both the Orestes and the Philoctetes, as compared with the unsubstantial Meleager, it may be remarked that their power over the affections is held by a double tenure,—grounded equally in the natural and the supernatural. They rest in part upon the religious sense, and therefore on the truths of the reason and the conscience, in which the "dark foundations" of our nature are laid; upon shadowy, therefore, but still the sublimest of all realities. Yet, if this basis were removed, there still remains a sufficient one in the physical facts of the two cases. The gnawing of a serpent's venom, sickness, solitude, and the sense of deep injury, are adequate to sustain the passion of the Philoctetes: and the most irreligious man, who totally rejects the supernatural, must yet (as a mere psychological truth) admit the power of a wounded conscience to produce the frenzy, the convulsions, and the phantoms which besiege the couch of Orestes.

rately might not have been particularly moving; but connected as they were, they lent to the bodily torments a sad and touching interest, which again was reflected back upon themselves. These evils consist in hunger, in he inclemency of a raw ungenial climate, in utter solitude, in the want of any συντροφον ὄμμα (*i.e.*, any household sympathizing eye), together with the naked and calamitous condition of life to which a human being is exposed under circumstances of such perfect destitution. When the Chorus is reflecting on the miserable condition of Philoctetes, the helpless solitude of it is the circumstance to which they direct their chief regard. In every word of this we recognise the social Grecian. For represent a man as oppressed by the most painful and incurable complaint, but at the same time as surrounded by affectionate friends who suffer him to want for no alleviation of his sufferings, and fail in no offices of consolation,—undoubtedly we grant him our sympathy, but not of a deep or an enduring character. Figure him, on the other hand, under the double calamity of sickness and of solitude; figure him mastered as by a demoniacal possession, incapable of giving help to himself through disease, incapable of receiving it through his situation; imagine him throwing out his complaints upon the desert air, expostulating with the very rocks and the sea, and pouring forth his wild litanies of anguish to the heavens, we then behold our human nature under the uttermost burden of wretchedness that it can support; we clasp our hands over the poor suffering creature; and, if ever an image crosses our fancy, of ourselves as standing in the same situation, we dismiss it with a shuddering horror.

Oh, that Frenchman! who had no sense to perceive all this, nor heart to comprehend it; or, if he had, was little enough to sacrifice to the beggarly taste of his nation every-

thing that constitutes the passion of the situation! Chataubrun, at one stroke, dissolves the whole interest by placing Philoctetes (*risum teneatis?*) in human society. He introduces upon the desolate island a certain princess, the daughter of Philoctetes; and not alone neither, for she has her duenna along with her, a sort of thing of which I am at a loss to know whether it were designed for the service of the princess or of the poet. Sophocles was aware that no compassion is stronger than that which is blended with images of despair: this it is which we feel for the situation of Philoctetes; and precisely this it is which the Greek poet carries to the uttermost limit, when he represents him as robbed of his bow, the sole stay and staff of his miserable existence. But the Frenchman knows a surer way to our heart: he alarms us with the prospect that Neoptolemus will be obliged to depart without his princess. This is what the Parisian critics call triumphing over the Ancients; and one of them proposed as a title for this very play of Chataubrun's, in relation to the supposed meagreness of interest in the treatment of Sophocles, *la Difficulté Vaincue.*

Next after this general *coup-d'œil*, carry your eye to the particular scenes in which Philoctetes is no longer the afflicted Solitary, but has hopes soon to quit his savage wilderness, and to repossess his kingdom; in which scenes, therefore, his whole misery is reduced to the agony of his wound. At this point of the action he moans, shrieks, and suffers the most appalling convulsions. And precisely against these scenes it is that the objection of violated decorum is levelled. All passions and affections, it is said, become offensive when expressed with too much violence. Nothing is so fallacious as prescribing general laws to our feelings, which lie in so subtle and intricate a web, that

even the most vigilant analysis can rarely succeed in taking up a single thread clear of the rest, or pursuing it through all the cross threads which arise to perplex it. And suppose it could, to what purpose? In nature there exists no such insulation of feeling; with every single feeling there arise simultaneously thousands of others, the very slightest of which is sufficient to disturb the unity of the fundamental one, to modify, or utterly to change its character; so that exceptions accumulate upon exceptions; and the pretended universal law shrinks at last into a mere experimental deduction from a few individual cases. We despise, say the objectors, any man from whom bodily pain extorts a shriek. Ay, but not always; not for the first time; nor if we see that the sufferer strains every nerve to stifle the expression of his pain; not if we know him otherwise to be a man of firmness; still less if we witness evidences of his firmness in the very midst of his sufferings, and observe that, although pain may have extorted a shriek, it has extorted nothing else from him, but that on the contrary he submits to the prolongation of his pain, rather than renounce one iota of his resolutions, even where such a concession would promise him the termination of his misery. Now all this is found in Philoctetes. Amongst the ancient Greeks, moral grandeur consisted no less in persevering love of friends, than in imperishable hatred of enemies. This grandeur Philoctetes maintains under all his torments. Pain has not so withered his human sympathies, but that he has still some tears for the calamities of his ancient friends. Neither has pain so unnerved him as that, to escape from *that*, he will forgive his enemies, or lend himself to their self-interested purposes. And this was the man, this rock of granite, that the Athenians, forsooth, were to despise; because the billows, that could not shatter him, yet drew from him some sounds that

testified his "huge affliction and dismay!" I must confess that I find little to my taste in the philosophy of Cicero; scarcely anywhere indeed, but least of all in that part of it which he parades in the second book of his Tusculan Disputations on the endurance of pain. One would suppose that his purpose had been to form a gladiator, so zealously does he play the rhetorician against the external manifestations of pain. "The poets," says he, "make us effeminate; for they introduce the bravest men weeping." Weeping? and why not? a theatre, I hope, is no arena. To the professed gladiator, sold or condemned to the Circus, it might be no more than becoming to act and to suffer with decorous apathy. He was trained, as to his first duty, to suppress all sound of lamentation, and every spasm of pain. For his wounds and his death were to furnish a spectacle of pleasure to the spectators; and thus it became the business of art to conceal all sensibility to pain and danger. The slightest expression of feeling might have awakened compassion; and that, frequently repeated, would soon have put an end to these cold-blooded exhibitions. But the pity, which was banished from the exhibitions of the arena, on the tragic stage was the sole end proposed: and this difference of purpose prescribed a corresponding difference of demeanour in the performers. The heroes of the stage were bound to show feeling; it was their duty to express pain, and to display the naked workings of nature. Any constraint or discipline of disguise would at once repel sympathy; and a cold expression of wonderment is the most that could be given to a prize-fighter in the Cothurnus. Such a title, in fact, and no higher, belongs to all the persons in the drama of Seneca; and it is my firm conviction, that the gladiatorial shows were the main cause of the indifferent success which the Romans had in tra-

gedy.* The spectators in the bloody amphitheatre acquired a distorted taste in nature; a Ctesias, perhaps, but not a Sophocles, might have cultivated his art in that school. Once familiar with these artificial death-scenes of the arena, the genius of tragedy must have descended into fustian and rhodomontade. Now, just as little as such bombast could inspire genuine heroism, is effeminacy to be charged upon the lamentations of Philoctetes. These lamentations express him as a man: his actions express him as a hero. Both together compose the human hero, not effeminate on the one hand, not callous or brutal on the other; but this or that in appearance accordingly as he is determined by duty and principle, or by the impulses of his human nature. Philoctetes, in short, in reference to heroism, is the very ideal of what wisdom can suggest, or the powers of imitative art can realize.

Not content, however, with this general philosophic sanction to his hero's sensibility, Sophocles has taken pains to forestall every objection to which by possibility it could have been liable. For, notwithstanding we do not of necessity despise him who expresses his pain by shrieks, still it is undeniable that we do not feel compassion for him in that degree which shrieks may seem to claim. How then ought those to bear themselves who are brought into con-

* This *was* a very sagacious remark the first time it was uttered; but with its novelty has faded away its ingenuity: and it may be doubted whether it is even true in the large extent to which Lessing carries it. No doubt the taste of the amphitheatre would confirm and strengthen a spurious taste in tragedy. But it is probable that originally both were effects from a common cause, viz., the composition of the Roman mind. For the whole history and literature of the Romans make it evident, that of all nations, they had the highest ideal for the grandeur of the human will in resisting passion, but the very lowest ideal for the grandeur of human passion in conflict with itself. Hence the overpowering suspicion of a Greek origin for the Atys of Catullus.

nexion with Philoctetes? Ought they to wear the semblance of deep emotion? That would be contrary to nature. Ought they to manifest the coldness and the alien eye which are common in such cases? That would be shocking to the spectators, from the harsh line of separation between two unharmonized states of feeling, and the consequent loss of unity in the impression. Here then is a dilemma; but this, as was said before, Sophocles has contrived to meet. And how? Simply through the separate interest collateral to the main one which occupies the subordinate characters: not being neutral parties, but preoccupied by their own objects, it implies no want of feeling that they cannot give an undivided attention to the lamentations of Philoctetes: and thus the spectator's attention is drawn off, from the disproportion between their sympathy and the shrieking of Philoctetes, to the counterbalancing interest for themselves of their own plan and the changes it undergoes; changes that are entirely due to the force of sympathy, whether weak or strong. Neoptolemus and the Chorus have practised a deceit upon the unhappy Philoctetes: they are witnesses to the despair into which this deceit is likely to plunge him; and just at this moment he falls into one of his dreadful convulsions. If this spectacle calls forth no remarkable external expression of their sympathy, it compels them, however, to reflection; to respect for the rights of human calamity, and to forbearance from all aggravation of it by treachery. This is what the spectator looks for; and the noble-minded Neoptolemus does not disappoint him. A Philoctetes, according to the Ciceronian conception, in full self-possession and master over his own pains, would have upheld Neoptolemus in his dissimulation; but a Philoctetes, whose sufferings transcend disguise, indispensable as that might seem to the purpose of

intercepting any sentiment of repentance in the mind of Neoptolemus with regard to the promise he had given of taking him off the island; a Philoctetes in short who is all nature, recalls Neoptolemus also to *his* nature. This revolution of mind in the young prince is of admirable effect, and the more touching, as it is brought about by no change in the situation of the parties, but by pure human sensibility. In the French Philoctetes, however, the "fine eyes" of beauty have their share in this revolution: "*De mes déguisemens que penseroit Sophie?*" says the son of Achilles. *What would Sophia think?* Faugh!

The very same artist-like contrivance of combining with the compassion due to the audible expression of pain, another and counterbalancing interest of a more selfish nature in the bystanders, has been employed by Sophocles in his Trachiniæ. The suffering of Hercules is not one which tends to exhaustion; on the contrary, it acts by irritation, and drives him into a frenzy-fit, in which he pants after revenge. Lichas he has already sacrificed to his fury, by dashing him to pieces against the rocks. The Chorus, therefore, composed of women, are naturally possessed by fear and consternation. This, and the agitation of suspense about the fate of Hercules—Will some god come to his assistance? or will he sink under his agonies? —constitute the proper and presiding interest which is but partially relieved by the other interest of compassion. No sooner is the suspense at an end, and the issue determined by the oracle, than Hercules recovers his composure; at which point, admiration of his final intrepidity swallows up all other feelings.

In comparing the suffering Hercules, however, with the suffering Philoctetes, we are not to forget that the first is a demigod, and the other no more than a man. A being

entirely human has no reason to be ashamed of his lamentations; but a demigod must naturally feel humiliated that the mortal in his composition could so far triumph over the immortal, as to extort tears from him and feminine complaints. We moderns profess to believe in no demigods; nevertheless, we demand of the pettiest hero that he should act and feel like a being of that order.

As to the objection that no actor could carry the shrieks and spasms of pain to the necessary point of illusion, it is one which I will not presume to determine one way or the other. If it should appear that this is really impossible to our own actors, I should then be obliged to plead the perfection of the declamatory art amongst the ancients, and of the subsidiary aids in its mechanic apparatus; a perfection of which at this day we retain no sort of idea.

NOTE.—In this section, amongst other instances of skill in the Philoctetes, Lessing insists upon the means used for exalting the wound; but *there* the merit is confined to a judicious selection from the existing traditions. A far better illustration of Lessing's meaning was once suggested to me from the Othello. The wretched La Harpe, it is well known, complains of the *handkerchief* as irretrievably mean. In the hands of a La Harpe we cannot doubt that it would have proved so. But Shakspere has so ennobled it by the wild grandeur of its history,—

> "That handkerchief
> Did an Egyptian to my mother give," &c.

that we can no more regard it as M. La Harpe's *mouchoir*, than the shattered banner of a veteran regiment as an old rag.

SECTION VI.

There have been critics who made no scruple of referring the Laocoon to the period of the Emperors, *i.e.*, to a Post-Virgilian age; not meaning to deny, however, that it was a work of Grecian art. This opinion they founded, no doubt, upon the resemblance between the group of the

sculptor, and the description of the poet, which was too close and circumstantial to be thought pure matter of accident: and, in a question of original conception, they took it for granted that all the presumptions were on the side of the poet. Apparently, they forgot that, without supposing either to have borrowed from the other, a third case is conceivable, viz., that both were indebted to a common model of some older period.

Waiving this question, however, I will suppose the artist to have imitated the poet, as a convenient assumption for exhibiting, in the deviations of the imitator from his model, the characteristic differences of their several arts.

The father and his two sons are represented, by both sculptor and poet, as linked into one intricate nodus by the voluminous folds of the snakes; an idea which is indisputably very happy and picturesque. In the distribution of these folds, it will be observed, that Virgil has been careful to leave the arms at liberty, in order to allow full activity to the hands. In this, the artist could not but follow him, for nothing gives more life and expression than the motion of the hands; and in a state of passion, above all, the most speaking countenance, without their aid, would become unimpressive. Arms, glued to the side by the limbs of the snakes, would have petrified the whole life and animation of the group. But beyond this single circumstance of disengaging the arms, there is no other in the poet's management of the folds, which the artist could have adopted with advantage. In the Virgilian Laocoon, the snakes are wound twice about his neck, twice about his throat, and surmount his head with their crests. This picture fills the imagination, the noblest parts are stifled by pressure, and the venom is carried straight to the face. Nevertheless, it was no picture for the artist; the object for him was to exhibit the

effects of the poison and the pain on the body; to do which it was necessary that he should expose the person freely to view, and without allowing of any external pressure that could affect the free play of the agitated nerves or the labouring muscles. Folds, as complete as those in the Virgilian picture, would have concealed the whole body; and that peculiar contraction of the abdomen, so expressive of bodily anguish, must have been invisible. Any parts that might have still remained exposed above and below the folds or between them, necessarily bearing marks of protrusion and tumor, would have indicated not so much the pains within as the external pressure. The folds about the throat, by increasing greatly the volume of that part, would have had the further disadvantage of disturbing that pyramidal tendency to a point, so agreeable to the eye, under the present arrangement of the group; whilst the pointed snaky crests, towering abruptly into the air from a basis so disproportionately broad, would have harshly broken up the present symmetrical contraction of the proportions. The ancient sculptors saw at a glance that a change of plan was in this instance prescribed by their art, and they transferred the folds from the body and throat, to the legs and the feet. So arranged, they caused no constriction or concealment that could interfere with the expression; on the contrary, they suggested the ideas of flight impeded and of immobility; ideas which reconcile the mind to that perpetuation of a momentary state, which it belongs to this art to present.

I know not how it has happened that the critics have failed to notice this difference between the statue and the poem. A second difference, which all of them *have* noticed (though not so much to praise as to excuse it), respects the costume. Virgil's Laocoon is in his priestly attire; but in

the sculptor's group, he and both of his sons appear naked. Some people have discovered a gross absurdity in this representation of a royal priest presiding naked at a sacrifice. And the answer, made very gravely by the connoisseurs, has been, that unquestionably it is a great offence against costume, but that it was unavoidable, the artist not having it in his power to give his figures a becoming attire. Heavy folds, say they, have a bad effect in sculpture: of two evils, the artist has chosen the least; and has preferred to trespass upon the very truth of the reality, rather than to violate the primal law of his art in the drapery. The objection would have been regarded by the ancient artists as ludicrous in a degree which would have acquitted them of any obligation to answer it. For, suppose that the texture of drapery were as much within the imitative powers of sculpture as of painting, would *that* prove that the sculptor had unnecessarily departed in this particular from his poetic model? Drapery in the poet's hands is no drapery; for it conceals nothing. Let Virgil robe his Laocoon, or unrobe him, the effect is all one; for our imagination looks through all disguises. Invest the forehead with the pontifical diadem; in the poet's hands this takes nothing from the effect; nay, it strengthens the impression of the calamity, by exhibiting the very symbol of his priestly office, which everywhere else commanded homage and veneration, steeped in the unhallowed venom of the reptile. But this subordinate effect would, in the sculptor's hands, have interfered with the main one. A diadem, or fillet, would have partially concealed the forehead; and in the forehead is seated the main expression.* As, therefore, in the circum-

* As regards the expression of intense bodily torment, possibly this may be admitted; certainly in any greater latitude it is untrue.

stance of the shriek, he had sacrificed the expression to the beauty, so here the artist sacrificed the costume to the expression. Universally, indeed, costume was slighted by the ancients; for, with their art under its highest law, which is Beauty, they felt that costume of any form was irreconcilable. Necessity it was that invented clothes; and what has art to do with necessity?* But drapery also has its

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* Here is a singular specimen of logic: Necessity invented clothes; and, therefore, art can have nothing to do with drapery. On the same principle, art would have nothing to do with architecture. What is the minor proposition by which Lessing would connect his conclusion with his major? Manifestly this, that it belongs to the very idea of a fine art, as distinguished from a mechanic art, to afford the utmost range to the *free* activities of the creative faculty; so that, for instance, it would obliterate this idea if it were to pursue any end to which the understanding could point out *necessarily* the means and shortest course. This is what the understanding does with regard to a purpose of utility in a mechanic art; the means are here given, and virtually pre-exist in the end; and are unfolded by the understanding, gradually and tentatively, as respects the individual artist, but with the severest necessity as respects the object; so that, if ever the artist may seem to have any freedom, it is only so long as he mistakes his course. Such is the ellipsis of Lessing, which, however, is of no avail to his conclusion. Necessity invented dress, and to a certain extent the same necessity continues to preside over it; a necessity, derived from climate and circumstances, dictates a certain texture of the dress; a necessity, derived from the human form and limbs, dictates a certain arrangement and corresponding adaptation. But thus far dress is within the province of a *mechanic* art. Afterwards, and perhaps, in a very genial climate, *not* afterwards but originally, dress is cultivated as an end *per se*, both directly for its beauty, and as a means of suggesting many pleasing ideas of rank, power, youth, sex, or profession. Cultivated for this end, the study of drapery is a *fine* art; and a draped statue is a work not in one but in two departments of art. Neither is it true, that the sense of necessity and absolute limitation is banished from the idea of a fine art. On the contrary, this sense is indispensable as a means of resisting (and, therefore, realizing) the sense of freedom; the freedom of a fine art is found not in the absence of restraint, but in the conflict with

appropriate beauty: Granted; but of what rank as compared with the beauty of the human form? And who, that could reach the highest effects of art, would content himself with the inferior? I suspect that the most perfect master of drapery, by that very accomplishment, points to his own deficiencies.

it. The beauty of dancing, for instance, as to one part of it, lies in the conflict between the freedom of the motion and the law of equilibrium, which is constantly threatened by it; sometimes also in the intricacy of the figure, which is constantly tending to swerve from a law which it constantly obeys; and sometimes in the mutual reference of two corresponding dancers or a centripetal reference of the whole, where the *launch*, as it were, of the motion and passion of the music, seem likely to impress a centrifugal tendency. Moreover, it is as inconsiderate in Lessing to suggest any opposition between the beauty of drapery and the beauty of the human form, as between the sun and the clouds, which may obscure, but may also reflect its lustre. They are not *so* in opposition, but that they may coalesce to a common effect; and the fact is, that in nature neither the grace nor the majesty of the human figure is capable of being fully drawn out *except* by drapery. In part this may be owing to the fact, that we are too little familiar with the undraped figure, to be able so readily in that state to judge of its proportions, its attitude or its motion; and partly to the great power of drapery under the law of association. But in a still greater degree it is due to the original adaptation, neither accidental nor derivative, of drapery to the human figure; which is founded in some measure on its power of repeating the flowing outlines of the human figure in another and more fluent material; whence arises the pleasure, subtlest of all in nature, and the most extensively diffused, of similitude in dissimilitude. That drapery is not essential in sculpture, and that the highest effects of sculpture are in fact produced without it, is in some measure dependent on this very law, of the interfusion of the similar and the dissimilar, for, in order that any effect should be felt as the *idem in altero*, it is necessary that each should be distinctly perceived; whereas, in sculptural drapery, from the absence of shading and of colouring, the "alterum" is not sufficiently perceived *as* an "alterum." There is another and a transcendent reason for the ill effects of sculptural drapery, into which the former reason merges. For why *does* sculpture reject colouring; and

SECTION VII.

My assumption, that the poetic Laocoon was the original creation, tends in no respect to the disparagement of the sculptor; say rather that it places in the strongest light the wisdom which presided over his imitation. He followed another indeed, but not blindly, or so as ever to be led astray by him in the minutest trifle. True, he had a model; yet, as this model was to be translated out of one art into another, room enough was left him for originality of thought to be manifested in his deviations from his arche-

why is it that just taste has always approved of the sightless eyes in statues? Manifestly, on the general and presiding law which determines the distinctions of the statuesque from the picturesque. The characteristic aim of painting is reality and life; of sculpture, ideality and duration. Painting is sensuous and concrete; sculpture abstract and imaginative. The *existere* and the *esse* of the metaphysicians express the two modes of being which they severally embody. Hence perhaps it is, that Jesus Christ has been perpetually painted, and but rarely sculptured; for in this mysterious incarnation, this entrance of Deity within the shade of time and passion, we must recollect that the divine is the true nature of Christ, and the human his superinduced nature; consequently it is to his human nature, as in this case the preternatural, that our attention is called. Life, therefore, or being in time—which is here the uppermost idea, fits the conception of a Christ to painting. But if the case had been reversed, and a nature originally human were supposed to have projected itself into eternity, and in some unspeakable way to have united itself with the Deity, the divine nature would, in this synthesis of two natures, have been the preternatural or superinduced, and the human nature the ground. Such a conception would be adapted to sculpture; and some such conception is in fact embodied in the sublime head of Memnon in the British Museum, in which are united the expressions of ineffable benignity with infinite duration. But, to return from this illustration, if the sense of the enduring and the essential be thus predominant in sculpture, it then becomes plain why a thing so accidental and so frail as drapery should tend to disturb its highest effects.

type; and this originality is, in fact, such as to place him in the same rank, as to *degree* of merit, with the poet whom he imitated.

It appears then, that, admirable as the picture is in the management of Virgil, there are traits in it, notwithstanding, incapable of being transferred to the purposes of the sculptor. The notion, therefore, that a good poetic description must also furnish a good picture in the painter's sense, and that a poet has only so far succeeded in his delineation as an artist can follow him, admits of great limitation; a limitation, by the way, which might have been presumed, even in default of any positive examples, simply from a consideration of the wider compass of poetry, and the peculiar nature of its images; for these, being less essentially sensuous than in the other arts, can co-exist without loss of their separate effects, in greater number and variety, than the objects themselves, or their natural signs, can do within the narrow limits of space and time.

That poetry is the art of greatest comprehension; that effects are within its power unattainable to painting; and that a poet may often have good reasons to prefer the non-picturesque to the picturesque; these are truths which seem to have been but little contemplated: and, accordingly, upon the slightest differences detected between the ancient poets and artists, criticism has been confounded. The elder poets, for example, generally invest Bacchus with horns. Strange, then, says Spence, that horns are so rarely found on his statues. The horns of Bacchus, however, were no natural horns, like those of fawns and satyrs; they were simply a frontal ornament, assumed or laid aside at pleasure. He could appear, therefore, unhorned; and did so, when he chose to reveal himself in his virgin beauty. Now it was precisely under that aspect that the artist wished to pre-

sent him; and hence his obligation to dismiss all adjuncts that might disturb that impression. Such an adjunct were the horns attached to the diadem. Such an adjunct was the diadem itself, which concealed the beautiful forehead, and on that account is found upon the statues as rarely as the horns, although not less frequently attributed by the poets to Bacchus as its inventor. To the poet both horns and diadem were simply a source of beautiful allusions to the acts and character of the god: the artist, on the contrary, found them hindrances in his way, that interposed between the display of beauties greater than themselves. And if my notion be true, that Bacchus was surnamed Διμορφος, in reference to a power of manifesting himself in a beautiful or a dreadful form, nothing can be more natural than that, of two modes of figuring him, the artist should adopt *that* which best corresponded with the purposes of his own art.

Statius and Valerius Flaccus have both described Venus under the passion of anger, with features so shockingly disfigured by that passion, that we should be apt to take her for one of the Furies rather than for the Goddess of Love. Now, without any view to the defence of these particular passages, I shall here make one general observation on the principle which they involve. The gods, and other supernatural creations of the artist and of the poet, are not entirely under the same law of art. To the artist they are no more than impersonated abstractions; and, that they may be understood and recognised for what they are, must always retain the same symbolic characteristics. Treated by the poet, on the contrary, they are substantial concrete persons,* who, besides their universal attributes, may bring

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* "*Treated by the poet, on the contrary, they are concrete per-*

forward, as occasion presents, other qualities and affections, that, for the moment, supersede and throw into the shade their abstract character. Venus, for example, to the sculptor, is the mere principle of the sexual love; she must, therefore, be clothed with the retiring beauty and the gracious charms that fascinate us in beloved objects. These characteristics belong to the abstract conception; and the least deviation from this ideal would dissolve the representative image. Suppose, for instance, that her beauty were figured, not coy and retreating, but majestic, here we should have at once a Juno, no matter what were the artist's design. Give to the charms a less gracious and more commanding air, and

sons," &c. The subject of allegory, and its proper treatment in the arts, is too extensive and too profound to be touched upon in a note. Yet one difficulty, which perplexes many readers (and in proportion as they are thoughtful readers) of allegoric fables, &c., may here be noticed, because it is met by this distinction of Lessing. In such fables, the course of the action carries the different persons into the necessity of doing and suffering many things extra-essential to their allegorical character. Thus, for example, Charity is brought by the conduct of the story into the various accidents and situations of a traveller; Hope is represented as the object of sexual love, &c. And, in all such cases, the allegoric character is for the moment suspended in obedience to the necessities of the story. But in this there is no error. For allegoric characters, treated according to the rigour of this objection, would be volatilized into mere impersonated abstractions, which is not designed. They are meant to occupy a midway station between the absolute realities of human life, and the pure abstractions of the logical understanding. Accordingly they are represented not as mere impersonated principles, but as incarnate principles. The office and acts of a concrete being are therefore rightly attributed to them, with this restriction, however, that no function of the concrete nature must ever be allowed to obscure or to contradict the abstraction impersonated, but simply to help forward the action by which that abstraction is to reveal itself. There is no farther departure, therefore, in this mode of treating allegory from the naked form of mere fleshless personification than is essential to its poetic effect.

ipso facto we shall have a Minerva. A wrathful Venus, therefore, to the sculptor, is a nugatory conception; for love, *as* love, can neither be wrathful nor vindictive. With the poet the case is otherwise: to him, also, Venus is the impersonated principle of love, but then something beside: she is not merely the impersonated principle, but also the incarnate principle, for she is the *goddess* of love, that is, a living creature, with her own separate individuality superadded to her abstract character, and consequently no less capable of abhorrence than of desire.

True it is, that in complex groups, the artist enjoys the same privilege with the poet of introducing Venus or any other divinity as a real existence, and clothed with functions extra-essential to the idea which she represents. But, if extra-essential, they must at least never be contradictory to that idea; not to tie them down to the severe rule, which some would impose, of deviating from the strictly essential attributes no farther than to their immediate consequences. Let us take the case of Venus delivering the Vulcanean armour to her son Æneas. Here the act is of that kind, which, though extra-essential to the abstract character of a Venus, may yet bend to the sculptor's purposes; for there is nothing here to prevent him from giving to his Venus all the grace and beauty which belong to her as the Goddess of Love. But take the case of the same Venus avenging her insulted authority upon the men of Lemnos, where she is exhibited descending upon a gloomy cloud in dilated proportions, with cheeks inflamed, hair dishevelled, a black robe thrown loosely about her, and a torch grasped in her hand; this clearly is no phasis under which she could be contemplated by the artist, there being no room here for any traits by which he could suggest her universal character. But to the poet such an attitude and action are not

ill adapted : since he has it in his power to place in direct juxtaposition to this attitude of fury another more appropriate to the goddess, and carrying into the very heart of the transitory passion, a sense of the calm and immortal beauty which it has for a moment been permitted to disturb.

In short, the poet has an exclusive privilege of painting by negative traits, and of so blending these with the positive, as to melt two opposite forms of revelation into unity. On this side stands a Venus, in the radiance and glory of her charms, her tresses confined by golden clasps, and her azure robe floating around her ; on that stands a goddess ;—another, and yet the same ; stripped of her cestus ; armed—but with far other flames, and with more terrific shafts, and accompanied by kindred furies. These are two opposite exhibitions of one and the same power ; the artist can exhibit but one of these ; the poet can exhibit both in direct succession. Shall the weakness of the one become a law for the strength of the other ? If Painting be the sister of Poetry, let her not be an envious sister : nor let the younger deny to the elder any ornaments whatsoever, simply because they are unsuitable to herself.

SECTION VIII.

In these comparisons of the artist and the poet, a principal regard must be directed to this question—Whether each were in equal circumstances of liberty, so as to be able to aim at the highest effects in his art, without external constraint.

Such a constraint existed to the artist, not unfrequently in the national religion. A work destined to religious uses in the public worship, could not always aim at that pure form of excellence which might have been realized under a single and undivided attention to the pleasure of the spec-

tator. Superstition had loaded the gods with images addressed to the sense: and thus it happened that the most beautiful amongst the gods were not always worshipped under their most beautiful forms.

Another mode of constraint existed in the internal difficulties and limitations of art. The personified abstractions of the poet were sufficiently characterized by the names and the sort of actions attributed to them. But to the artist these means of explaining himself were denied. By way of interpretation to *his* personifications, he was reduced to the necessity of connecting with them certain sensuous images or emblems. These images, being understood in a sense different from their direct literal import, gave to the personifications which they accompanied the rank and title of *Allegoric* figures. A woman, for instance, with a bridle in her hand, or a woman leaning against a pillar, are in the arts allegoric personages; that is, impersonated abstractions expounded by emblems. But the corresponding creations of Poetry, viz., Temperance and Constancy, are simply impersonated abstractions and not allegorizations. This mode of expressing moral functions by sensuous images was a product of the necessity which beset the artist. But why should the poet who knows nothing of this necessity adopt the artist's expedient for meeting it? The resources of Art, however meritorious for following the steps of poetry, are in themselves no absolute perfections. When the artist symbolizes a figure by some sensuous image, he exalts this figure to the rank of a living being: but the poet, by adopting such auxiliary exponents, degrades what was already a living being to the rank of a puppet.

There is, however, amongst the attributes by which the artist characterizes his abstractions, one class which is both more capable and more deserving of being transferred to a

poetic use: I mean those exponents, which, strictly considered, are not allegoric, but simply express the instruments appropriate to the functions of the impersonated ideas considered as living agents. The bridle in the hand of Temperance, or the pillar against which Constancy is leaning, are purely allegoric, and therefore of no poetic application. On the other hand, the balance which is carried by Justice, is but imperfectly allegoric; because the right use of the balance is *literally* one function of Justice. And the lyre or flute in the hand of a Muse, the spear in the hand of Mars, or the hammer and tongs in the hand of Vulcan, are not allegoric at all, but mere instruments for producing the effects which we ascribe to those beings. Of this last class are those attributes which the ancient poets sometimes interweave with their descriptions, and which, by way of distinguishing them from such as are properly allegoric, I would propose to call the poetic attributes. The poetic attributes are to be interpreted literally; but the allegoric on principles of analogy.

SECTION IX.

What strikes us in the artist, as the distinguishing point of excellence, is the execution; the invention, in *his* case, holding but the second place in our regard. But in the poet this is reversed; and we make light of his faculty for executing, compared with his power of original conception. Take the Laocoon, for instance; here the tortuous involution of the father and his sons into one group is an original thought; and, had Virgil derived this from the sculptor, the weightier part of his merit would have vanished. On the other hand, suppose the artist to have been indebted in this point to the poet, and, therefore, confessedly to have foregone all claim to invention, he would still have had

room enough for the display of merit the most splendid, and of a kind the most appropriate to his art; to express a passion in marble being far more difficult than by the instrument of words.

With this readiness, however, to dispense with the faculty of invention in the artist, it is natural that there should have arisen on his part a corresponding indifference to that sort of pretension. Sensible that it was hopeless for him to found any part of his distinction upon originality in the conception, he was willing to adopt ideas from any quarter, no matter whether old or new, and to throw the stress of his efforts upon the execution. Accordingly, he confined himself within the compass of a few popular subjects, and applied whatever inventive power he had to the modification of the familiar, and the recombination of old materials. And this in fact is the meaning of the word *invention*, when attributed to painting in the professed treatises on that art; invention applied not to the entire subject, but to the individual parts, or to their connexion with each other; that sort of invention, in short, which Horace recommended to the tragic poet. Certainly the poet has a great advantage who treats a known story. Thousands of petty details, which would else be requisite to put the reader in possession of the incidents and characters, are thus dispensed with; and the more rapidly his audience are made to comprehend the situation, the more readily will the appropriate interest arise. Now, if this be advantageous to the poet, *à fortiori* it will be so to the painter. A subject, comprehensible at a glance in the purpose and meaning of its whole composition, is indispensable to the full effects of his art. For the final result depends much upon the first impression; and, if *that* be broken and retarded by a tedious process of question and investigation,

the whole strength and liveliness of our emotions is intercepted and frost-bound.

Now, laying together both considerations—first, that novelty of subject is the very last merit to which we look for in a painting; and, secondly, that the very absence of this quality facilitates the impression which it aims at—I think that we are under no necessity of ascribing the deficiency of invention in this art to a motive of indolent self-accommodation in the painter, to his ignorance, or to the mechanical difficulties of his art, as absorbing his whole zeal and attention; but, on the contrary, that it will appear to have a deep foundation in the principles of the art; and that what at first sight might have been thought to limit the compass and energy of its effects, is in fact to be applauded as a wise abstinence on the part of the artist. Undoubtedly in one respect he might have found a better field for his art than has in fact been chosen since the time of Raphael; for Homer, and not Ovid, should have been the painter's manual. But this I say on a consideration of the superior grandeur which belongs to the Homeric subjects, and with no prejudice to the principle here maintained, that absolute novelty of story and situation is so far a defect in painting, and hostile to its highest purpose.

This principle is one which did not escape Aristotle. It is recorded that he advised Protogenes to paint subjects from the life of Alexander; an advice which, unfortunately for himself, that painter did not adopt. However, the rationale of it is evident; the acts of Alexander were at that time the subject of general conversation; and it did not require the sagacity of an Aristotle to foresee that they could never become obscure, or lose their interest and meaning with posterity.

SECTION X.

In poetry (for example, in the Homeric poetry) we find exhibited two classes of acts and agents; the visible and the invisible. This is a distinction which painting is incapable of expressing. Everything expressible in this art must be essentially within the field of the visible. Let me take an instance: The gods are divided against each other upon the fate of Troy; and this division of interest at length comes to issue in personal combat. Now this combat, in the poet's representation of it, goes on out of sight; which circumstance of invisibility allows free latitude to the imagination, for figuring the acts and persons of the gods upon any possible scale of superhuman proportions. But painting is tied to the conditions of a visible scene, in which there will always be some parts so necessarily determined by the fixed standards of nature, as to furnish a scale for measuring the supernatural agents. This scale, when brought into immediate juxtaposition with an order of proportions adjusted to so very different a standard, translates what was grand and idealized in the indefinite exhibition of poetry, into the monstrous and extravagant under the material delineations of art.

Minerva, for instance, being assaulted by Mars, steps back, and snatches up a huge stone from the ground. Now, I ask what ought to be the stature of a goddess who raises and hurls with ease a stone, simply to roll which into the station it occupies had required the force not of one man, but of several men united in some primæval age; considering also, that these early patriarchs are described by Nestor as far superior in power to the heroes of the Iliad, and those again described by Homer as having double the strength of his own generation? For the

painter there arises here this manifest dilemma: either the stature of the goddess must, or it must not, be proportioned to the size of the stone. Suppose the first case, and the whole marvellous of the act vanishes. A man three times greater than myself, must naturally be able to throw a stone three times heavier. Suppose the other case, and we revolt from the manifest incongruity between the weight and the power, which, being made palpable to the sense in a picture, cannot be surmounted by a cold act of reflection upon the superhuman nature of the agent, as involving superhuman strength. Whenever we see effects of unusual magnitude, on principles of proportion, we look for adequate organs in the agent. Mars, again, when prostrated by this enormous stone, covers seven acres of ground. Now, it is impossible that the painter should represent him under these prodigious dimensions. But, if not, he ceases to be the 'Homeric Mars; and is, in fact, noways distinguished from any ordinary warrior.

It was the opinion of Longinus, that, if the Homeric men are idealized into gods, the gods, on the other hand, are sometimes degraded into men. This tendency to degradation in the poet, which in him is no more than a tendency, painting carries into perfect development. Size, strength, speed, which Homer always attributes in higher measure to his gods than to the most eminent of his heroes, painting must of necessity lower to the common standard of human nature: Jupiter and Agamemnon, Apollo and Achilles, Ajax and Mars, are to the painter beings of one and the same order, whom he has no means of distinguishing except by mere conventional characteristics. However, though irrepresentable by painting, these superhuman dimensions lie within the field of sculpture; and I am satisfied that the general mode of delineating the gods,

which prevails in the ancient statues no less than the colossal scale of their proportions, was originally derived from Homer.

SECTION XI.

Agreeably to this view of the case, if it is very possible that a poem should be rich in materials for the painter, and yet not in itself picturesque, as, on the other hand, highly picturesque, and yet unproductive for the painter; there is an end at once to the conceit, which would measure the merits of the poet by the degree in which he adapts himself to the purposes of the artist.* The source of this

* A slight attention to this and other passages of Lessing would have exposed the hollowness of a notion brought forward by Dr. Darwin, with respect to the essential idea of poetry. He first directly insisted on a fancy (*theory* one cannot call it), that nothing was strictly poetic, or however not poetic κατ' ἐξοχὴν, except what presented a visual image. One of his own illustrations was Pope's line,

" Or Kennet swift, for silver eels renown'd,"

which, according to the Doctor, was translated into poetry by reading

" Or Kennet swift, where silver graylings play."

This notion has, in fact, in every age, been acted upon more or less consciously by writers in verse, and still governs much of the criticism which is delivered on poetry: though it was first formally propounded by Dr. Darwin. Possibly even the Doctor himself would have been disabused of his conceit, if he had been recalled by this and other passages in Lessing to the fact, that so far from being eminently, or (as he would have it) exclusively the matter of poetry, the picturesque is, in many instances, incapable of a poetic treatment. Even Lessing is too palpably infected by the error which he combats; the poetic being too frequently in his meaning nothing more than that which is clothed in a form of sensuous apprehensibility. The fact is, that no mere description, however visual and picturesque, is in any instance poetic *per se*, or except in and through the passion which presides. Among our own writers of eminent genius, who have too often submitted, if not sacrificed, the passion to picturesque beauty, one of the principal is Mr. Landor, especially in his Gebir. But this subject will be farther illustrated elsewhere.

error lies in a verbal ambiguity. A picture in the poet's sense is not necessarily that which can be translated into the material picture of the artist. Every trait, no matter whether visual or not, by which the poet makes his object sensuously apprehensible, and so brightens it to the consciousness that we have a livelier sense of that object than of the poet's words, may be denominated a picture; inasmuch as it carries us nearer to that degree of illusion which it is the obvious and characteristic end of painting to effect. Pictures in this poetic sense, as here explained, the ancients called Φαντασιαι; and it were to be wished that this name had been adopted in modern criticism. So denominated, they would not readily have bent to the restraints of material painting: whereas, with the name of *pictures*, there was at once connected an ambiguity which became a ready source of misapprehension.

Now, first of all, it is evident that the poet can carry to the necessary degree of illusion the representation of other objects than of visual ones. And here arises a distinction which at once cuts off from the painter's use a whole world of descriptive imagery, which is open to the poet. However, I will confine myself to visual imagery, which is common to thom both. Whence is it then, I ask, that even within this field there is not a little which the painter must forego as unfitted for his purposes? The reason is this:—the very signs or language by which painting accomplishes its imitations, can be connected only in space. Hence it arises that this art is obliged to abstain from all images, of which the different parts are in the successional connexion of time: on which account progressive actions, *as* such, are irrepresentable by painting; and it is thus restricted in its imitations either to co-existing actions, of which the parts are collateral to each other, or to material objects, which

can be so treated by means of attitude and position as to suggest an action which they cannot directly express. But I will endeavour to unfold all this in connexion with its ultimate grounds.

The language of painting consists in lines and colours, which exist in space; the language of poetry in articulate sounds, which exist in time. Now, if it is undeniable that between the sign and the thing signified there must be reciprocal relations, and a subjection to a common law, it follows that co-existing signs can express none but co-existing objects, or those of which the parts are in co-existence; and that successional signs can express none but successional objects, or those of which the parts are in succession. Co-existing objects are called bodies: consequently bodies, with their visible properties, compose the proper objects of painting. Successional objects, or of which the parts are in succession, we call actions: consequently actions compose the proper object of poetry.

But all bodies exist in time as well as in space. They endure; and in every moment of this successional existence they may present different phenomena, and stand variously related to the surrounding objects. Each of these shifting phases and momentary states of relation is derived from that which preceded, and furnishes the ground for another which succeeds; on which account even that single aspect of an object to which painting is restricted, may be regarded as the centre of this successive series; and thus far it is in the power even of painting to express actions, but only indirectly through the phenomenal state of bodies, and by way of suggestion from the known succession of those states. Actions, on the other hand, have no separable or independent existence, but are the adjuncts of living beings; and, in so far as these beings are material beings, poetry may

be said also to describe bodily forms, not directly, however, but only by way of suggestion, whilst describing the motions or successive changes and actions which imply them.

Painting being in all its combinations subject to the law of co-existence, can apply to its use only one single instant of the action; on which account it is bound to select that one from the whole succession which is the most pregnant, and which points least ambiguously to what precedes and follows.

Poetry, again, tied to the law of succession, can avail itself of but one property in any material object; and must therefore select *that* one which presents the most sensuous impression of the object; regard being had to the particular relation under which the poet's purpose requires that it should be contemplated. From this principle is derived the critical injunction of simplicity in the choice of picturesque epithets, and of abstinence in the delineation of material objects.

SECTION XII.

In all this dry deduction of my principles, I should place but little confidence, if I had not found them confirmed by the practice of Homer; or rather I should say, if it were not from this very practice of Homer that I had originally derived them. It is upon these principles only that the grand style of Grecian poetry, in its severest models, can be determinately explained; and upon these principles only that it would be possible to place in its right light the very opposite style of many modern poets, who maintain a foolish contest with the painter in a point where all competition with him, by the very nature of the case, is hopeless.

I observe that Homer paints nothing but progressive actions, that is to say, actions in their motions and succes-

sion of stages; fixed bodies, therefore, or individual things he paints only phenomenally, or through their participation in these fluent actions expressed in corresponding changes. What wonder then that the painter finds little or no materials for his own art in the direct descriptions of Homer, these being always tied to the successions of time; and that, on the other hand, he finds his chief harvest not there, where the poet has expressly designed a description, but where the mere course of the narration has conveyed into one group a number of beautiful figures, in fine attitudes and in an interesting situation, although, agreeably to my principles, they are the precise cases on which the poet will have put forth the least descriptive power, as being a composition of fixed forms brought together under the law of co-existence in space.

If in any case Homer so far deviates from his general practice as to describe a stationary individual form, he despatches it with a single trait. A ship he will describe sometimes as the black ship, sometimes as the hollow ship, sometimes as the swift ship, or at the most as the well-rowed black ship. Further than this he will not descend into the detail of description. But, on the other hand, the ship, as a thing participating in action, under the accidents of leaving harbour, pursuing its voyage, making the land, he pursues into a circumstantiality of description which the painter could not transfer to his canvas in less than five or six separate pictures.

Even where circumstances compel Homer to detain the eye longer upon some individual form, still, however, he produces no picture which the painter could follow with his pencil; by various artifices he contrives to lead the object through a succession of stages in every one of which it puts on a different aspect; whilst the painter must wait

for its final stage, in order there to exhibit, as finished and mature, what, under the hands of the poet, we saw running through its various stages of birth and growth. For instance, if Homer wishes to exhibit the car of Juno, the whole is placed before us in its parts; the wheels, the axletree, the seat, the pole, the reins, and traces, not so much formed and previously co-existing, as growing up in succession under the hands of Hebe. Upon the wheels only the poet has detained us beyond his custom, to exhibit the eight iron spokes, the golden fellies, the studs of iron, and the silver nave: on all the rest he has bestowed but a single trait.

Again, when the dress of Agamemnon is to be described, the whole is brought before us article by article; but how? Another poet, with the same purpose before him, would have described each part separately, down to the minutest fringe: but Homer introduces us to the King in the act of dressing himself: and thus without making the narrative pause for the description, in the very growth and succession of this action (the action of dressing), we see displayed before us the dress itself in all its parts: the soft tunic or shirt, the ample robe, the beautiful buskins, the sword, and finally the regal sceptre.

This very sceptre also, which is characterized simply by the epithets of paternal and imperishable, in what way does Homer convey to us an impression of its ideal grandeur? Instead of a formal description, he gives us its history, first as in the act of growing up under the divine workmanship of Vulcan; next, as it glittered in the hands of Jupiter; then as the credential distinction of Mercury; as the truncheon of the martial Pelops; and as the pastoral staff of the pacific Atrius. Such is the artifice by which Homer contrives to keep an individual object before the eye, when his

purpose requires it; and in this way, without descending to a frigid description of its several parts, he succeeds in connecting a deeper impression with it than a painter could have done by the most elaborate picture. The same skill is exhibited with regard to the sceptre of Achilles and the bow of Pandarus: in both of which cases the description moves through the stages of a narrative; and the material images under the inanimate law of co-existence, are thrown into the shifting circumstances of a succession which advances concurrently with the advancing verses of the poet.

SECTION XIII.

It will be objected, however, to the doctrine of the last Section, that the signs which poetry employs (that is, words) are not merely a successional, but also a conventional or arbitrary order of signs; and, in this latter character at least, well fitted to express the order of co-existences in space no less than the order of successions in time; and, as a most illustrious and decisive example of this from Homer himself, the shield of Achilles will be alleged; that famous shield, which Homer has described with so much punctual circumstantiality in reference to its substance, form, and embellishments, through upwards of a hundred magnificent verses, that a modern artist would find no difficulty in reproducing it as a faithful and accurate drawing.

To this objection my answer is, that I have already answered it. Homer describes the shield not as a thing finished and complete, but in the stages of its growth. Here again he has adopted the artifice of throwing an order of co-existence into an order of succession, and thus converted the inert description of a fixed material object into the living picture of an action. It is not the shield that

we see, but the divine artist in the act and process of making it. He advances with hammer and tongs to the anvil; forges the plates out of the rude unwrought metal; and immediately the figures, which are to decorate it, start forward in relief, each after each under the touches of his creative hand. At last the work is finished, and we survey it with astonishment; but with the enlightened and acquiescing astonishment of an eye-witness to its formation.

Far different is the case with Virgil's shield. Either the Roman poet was in this instance insensible to the refined art of his model; or else the peculiar nature of his own embellishments might strike him as incompatible with the same evolution through the actual process of construction. The emblazonments of *his* shield are prophetic; now prophecy, *as* prophecy,* and in the very act of delivery, demands an obscurity of language with which the definite names of persons would not harmonize. Yet, on these very names it was that to Virgil, a courtier and a patriot, the main merit of the purpose rested; and thus it became necessary that this course of sculptural prophecy should be exhibited, not as growing up beneath the hands of Vulcan, but as interpreted and looked back upon by the poet, and therefore as a work already existing and complete. Such is our excuse for Virgil's management, which however does not remedy its bad effect. The preparations are the same in both poets for the labours of Vulcan. But in Virgil no sooner are we introduced to the god and his Cyclopean agents, than the curtain is dropped, and we are transported to quite another scene, in which Venus appears with the

* By "prophecy *as* prophecy," Lessing means prophecy in the meaning and from the station of the prophet, not as retrospectively contemplated by the interpreter.

armour already complete. She rests it against an oak; and after the hero has sufficiently admired, handled, and tried it, the description commences in due form; yet as it is not Æneas who delivers this description (for he is unacquainted with the interpretation of the shield), nor Venus, but the poet speaking in his own person, it follows that the action of the poem is here obliged to stand still. In short, as no one person of the poem takes any part in this description, and as it is a matter of indifference with regard to anything which follows, whether the ornaments of the shield had been the actual ones or any other, the shield of Æneas must be pronounced to be a pure mechanic interpolation, contrived with no other view than that of flattering the Roman pride. The shield of Achilles, on the contrary, is a spontaneous growth of the poem. A shield was at any rate to be made; and from the hands of a god even implements of use should not be turned off destitute of beauty. The shield, therefore, must have ornaments. But the point of difficulty was to exhibit these ornaments indirectly, and as if incidentally to the main purpose; and this could only be effected by the very course which Homer has adopted, of making them arise as parts of the very substance of the shield in the act of its construction. Virgil, on the contrary, must be supposed to have created the shield for the sake of its ornaments, since he thinks proper to bestow an express description upon these ornaments, not as accessary parts necessarily involved in the forging of the shield itself, but separately and on their own account.

So much for the illustration of the argument. As to the argument itself, that the signs employed by poetry, being conventional, are as well fitted to express the order of co existence as that of succession, undoubtedly this is

true, but it is a property which belongs to language generally, and not as it is especially restricted to the purposes of poetry. The prosaist is satisfied if he impresses clear and distinct ideas; but the poet is required to impress them with the strength and vivacity of realities. He must describe with the force of painting; and now let us see how far the co-existing parts of material objects are adapted to that sort of description.

How is it that we attain to a clear representation of an object in space? First of all, we regard the separate parts of it individually; next, the connexion of these parts; and, finally, the whole. These three operations our senses execute with such wonderful rapidity, that they melt into an apparent unity. Now this unity it is not within the power of a poet to attain; the mind is so much retarded by the separate parts of a consecutive description, that it cannot reproduce them with speed enough to connect them into a single representative impression of the whole. Hence the poetical illusion vanishes. Where the purpose does not demand this illusion, as in the case of a prose writer, who is describing merely to the understanding, pictures of objects under a law of co-existence are perfectly admissible. The didactic poet, even *as* such, is not excluded from this use; for, wherever he is strictly didactic, he is in fact no poet. Thus, for example, Virgil, in his Georgics, describes a cow fitted for the purpose of breeding. In doing this, he runs through the series of characteristics which distinguish such a cow, manifestly with the plain prosaic purpose of rectifying our practical judgments in this matter; as to the power of the mind to combine this series of separate notices into the unity of picture, *that* was a question which with *his* purpose he was perfectly justified in neglecting.

POSTSCRIPT ON DIDACTIC POETRY.

In the three last sentences there is a false thought, unworthy of Lessing's acuteness. The vulgar conception of didactic poetry is that the adjunct *didactic* expresses the primary function (or, in logical phrase, the *difference*) of that class of poetry; as though the business were, first of all, to teach something, and secondly, to convert this into poetry by some process of embellishment. But such a conception contains a *contradictio in adjecto*, and is in effect equivalent to demanding of a species that it shall forego, or falsify, the distinctions which belong to it, in virtue of its genus. As a term of convenience, *didactic* may serve to discriminate one class of poetry; but didactic it cannot be in philosophic rigour without ceasing to be poetry. Indirectly, it is true, that a poet in the highest departments of his art may, and often does, communicate mere knowledge, but never as a direct purpose, unless by forgetting his proper duty. Even as an epic poet, for instance, Virgil may convey a sketch of the Mediterranean Chorography, and Milton of the Syrian Pantheism; but every reader perceives that the first arises purely in obedience to the necessities of the narrative, and that the other is introduced as an occasion of magnificent display, and no more addressed to a didactic purpose, than the Homeric Catalogue of Ships, which gave the meagre hint for it, was designed as a statistical document, or than the ceremonial pomps and emblazonments of a coronation, &c., are designed to teach the knowledge of heraldry. This is self-evident; but the case is exactly the same in didactic poetry, with this single difference, that the occasions for poetic display are there derived, uniformly and upon principle, from cases admitting of a didactic treatment, which, in the two instances just noticed, furnished the occasion only by accident. The object is to wrestle with the difficulties of the case, by treating a subject naturally didactic in a manner, and for a purpose, *not* didactic; this is accomplished by such a selection from circumstances otherwise merely technical, and addressed to the unexcited understanding, as may bend to the purposes of a Fine Art; a branch of knowledge is thrown

through that particular evolution which serves to draw forth the circumstances of beautiful form, feeling, incident, or any other interest, which in some shape, and in some degree, attach themselves to the dullest exercises of mere lucrative industry. In the course of this evolution, it is true that some of the knowledge proper to the subject is also communicated; but this is collateral to the main purpose, which is to win the beauty of art from a subject in itself unpromising or repulsive; and, therefore, the final object of a didactic poet is accomplished not *by* the didactic aspects of his poem, but directly *in spite of* them; the knowledge which emerges in such a poem, exists not for itself, but as an indirect occasion for the beauty, and also as a foil or a counter-agent for strengthening its expression; as a shadow by which the lights are brightened and realized.

Suppose a game at cards—whist, l'hombre, or quadrille—to be carried through its principal circumstances and stages, as in the Rape of the Lock and elsewhere, nobody is so absurd as to imagine that in this case the poet had designed to teach the game; on the contrary, he has manifestly presupposed that knowledge in his reader as essential to the judicious apprehension of his description. With what purpose, then, has he introduced this incident, where no necessity obliged him, and for what is it that we admire its execution? Purely as a trial of skill in playing the game with grace and beauty. A game at cards is a mimicry of a battle, with the same interests, in a lower key. The peculiar beauty, therefore, of such a description, lies in the judicious selection of the principal crises and situations incident to the particular game in its most general movement. To be played with skill and grace, it must evolve itself through the great circumstances of danger, suspense, and sudden surprise,—of fortune shifting to this side and that,—and, finally, of irrevocable *peripeteia*, which contain the philosophic abstract of such scenes as to the interest which they excite. Meantime the mere instruments by which the contest is conducted, the cards themselves, by their gay colouring, and the antique *prescriptiveness* of the figures (which in the midst of real arbitrariness has created an artificial semblance of law and necessity, such as reconciles us to the

drawing upon China cups, Egyptian and Etruscan ornaments, &c.), throw an air of brilliancy upon the game, which assists the final impression.

Now, here in miniature, we have the law and *exemplar* of didactic poetry. And in any case, where the poet has understood his art, it is in this spirit that he has proceeded. Suppose, for instance, that he selects as the basis of this interest, the life, duties, and occupations of a shepherd; and that instead of merely and professedly describing them, he chooses to exhibit them under the fiction of teaching them. Here, undoubtedly, he has a little changed the form of his poem; but that he has made no change in the substance of his duties, nor has at all assumed the real functions of a teacher, is evident from this: Pastoral life varies greatly in its aspect, according to the climate in which it is pursued; but whether in its Sicilian mode, which tends to the beautiful, or in our sterner northern mode, which tends to the sublime, it is, like all other varieties of human employment, of a mixed texture, and disfigured by many degrading circumstances. These it is the business of the poet to clear away, or to purify at least, by not pressing the attention on their details. But, if his purpose and his duties had been really didactic, all reserve or artist-like management of this kind would have been a great defect, by mutilating the full communication of the knowledge sought. The spirit in which he proceeds, is that of selection and abstraction: he has taken his subject as a means of suggesting, of justifying, and of binding into unity, by their reference to a common ground, a great variety of interesting scenes, situations, incidents, or emotions. Wheresoever the circumstances of the reality lead naturally into exhibitions on which it is pleasant to be detained, he pursues them. But, where the facts and details are of such a nature as to put forth no manifestations of beauty or of power, and, consequently, are adapted to no mode of pleasurable sympathy, it is his duty to evade by some delicate address, or resolutely to suppress them, which it would not be, if the presiding purpose were a didactic one.

What may have misled Lessing on this point, is the fact that subjects are sometimes, chosen, and lawfully chosen, for didactic poems, which are not adapted to pleasurable sympathies in

any mode, but in a great outline to a sympathy* of disgust. Beauty, however, exists everywhere to the eye which is capable of detecting it; and it is our right, and duty indeed, to adapt ourselves to this ordinance of nature, by pursuing and unveiling it even under a cloud of deformity. The *Syphilis* of Fracastorius, or Armstrong's *Art of Health*, I do not particularly allude to; because in neither case is the subject treated with sufficient grace or sufficient mastery over its difficulties. But suppose the case of some common household occupation, as the washing of clothes for example; no class of human labours is at a lower point of degradation, or surveyed with more disdain by the aspiring dignity of the human mind, than these domestic ones, and for two reasons; first, because they exercise none but the meanest powers; and, secondly, from their origin and purpose, as ministering to our basest necessities. Yet I am persuaded that the external aspect of this employment, with no more variety than it presents in the different parts of this island, might be so treated as to unfold a series of very interesting scenes, without digressing at all from the direct circumstances of the art (if art it can be called), whilst the comic interest, which would invest the whole as proceeding from a poet, would at once disarm the inherent meanness in the subject, of all power to affect us unpleasurably.

Now Virgil, in his ideal of a cow, and the description of her meritorious points, is nearly upon as low ground as any that is here suggested. And this it is which has misled Lessing. Treating a mean subject, Virgil must (he concludes) have adapted his description to some purpose of utility: for, if his purpose had been beauty, why lavish his power upon so poor an occasion, since the course of his subject did not in this instance oblige him to any detail? But, if this construction of the case were a just one, and that Virgil really *had* framed his descriptions merely as a guide to the practical judgment, this passage would certainly deserve to be transferred from its present station in the Georgics to the Grazier's Pocket-book, as

* The word *sympathy* has been so much contracted in its meaning by a conversational use, that it becomes necessary to remind the reader that this is *not* a false application of it.

being (what Lessing in effect represents it to be) a plain *bonâ fide* account of a Smithfield prize cow.* But, though the object here described is one which is seldom regarded in any other light than that of utility, and, on that account, is of necessity a mean one,† yet the question still remains, in what spirit, and for what purpose, Virgil has described this mean object? For meanness and deformity even, as was said before, have their modes of beauty. Now, there are four reasons which might justify Virgil in his description, and not one of them having any reference to the plain prosaic purpose which Lessing ascribes to him. He may have described the cow—

I. As a *difficult* and intractable subject, by way of a *bravura*, or passage of execution. To describe well is not easy; and, in one class of didactic poems, of which there are several, both in Latin, English, and French, viz., those which treat of the mechanic parts of the critical art, the chief stress of the merit is thrown upon the skill with which thoughts, not naturally susceptible of elegance, or even of a metrical expression, are modulated into the proper key for the style and ornaments of verse. This is not a very elevated form of the poetic art, and too much like rope-dancing. But to aim humbly is better than to aim awry, as Virgil would have done if interpreted under Lessing's idea of didactic poetry.

II. As a *familiar* subject. Such subjects, even though posi-

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* Mrs. Barbauld, sixty years ago, gave us a very pleasing sketch on this subject, in her "Washing-Day;" but she has narrowed the interest by selecting, amongst the circumstances, the picturesque ones, to the exclusion of all those which approach to the beautiful, and also by the character of the incidents, such as the cheerless reception of the visitor; for, as the truth of such an incident belongs only to the lower and less elegant modes of life, it is not fitted for a general sympathy.

† This, for two reasons: 1*st*, because whatever is useful, and merely useful, is essentially definite, being bounded and restricted by the end to which it is adapted; it cannot transcend that end, and therefore can never in the least degree partake of the illimitable; 2*d*, because it is always viewed in a relation of inferiority to something beyond itself. To be useful, is to be ministerial to some end; now the end does not exist for the sake of the means, but the means for the sake of the end. Hence, therefore, one reason why a wild animal is so much more admired than the same animal domesticated. The wild animal is useless, or viewed as such; but, on that very account, he is an end to himself, whilst the tame one is merely an instrument or means for the ends of others. The wild Turkey of America is a respectable bird, but the "tame villatic fowl" of the same species in England is an object of general contempt.

tively disgusting, have a fascinating interest when reproduced by the painter or the poet; upon what principle has possibly not been sufficiently explained. Even transient notices of objects and actions, which are too indifferent to the mind to be more than half consciously perceived, become highly interesting when detained and reanimated, and the full light of the consciousness thrown powerfully upon them by a picturesque description. A street in London, with its usual furniture of causeway, gutter, lamp-posts, &c., is viewed with little interest; but, exhibited in a scene at Drury Lane, according to the style of its execution, becomes very impressive. As to Lessing's objection about the difficulty of collecting the successive parts of a description into the unity of a co-existence, that difficulty does not exist to those who are familiar with the subject of the description, and at any rate is not peculiar to this case.

III. As an *ideal.* Virgil's cow is an ideal in her class. Now, every ideal, or *maximum perfectionis* (as the old metaphysicians called it) in natural objects, necessarily expresses the dark power of nature which is at the root of all things under one of its infinite manifestations in the most impressive way; that which elsewhere exists by parts and fractions dispersed amongst the species and in tendency, here exists as a whole and in consummation. A Pandora, who should be furnished for all the functions of her nature in a luxury of perfection, even though it were possible that the ideal beauty should be disjoined from this ideal organization, would be regarded with the deepest interest. Such a Pandora in *her* species, or an approximation to one, is the cow of Virgil, and he is warranted by this consideration in describing her without the meanness of a didactic purpose.

IV. As a *beautiful* object. In those objects which are referred wholly to a purpose of utility, as a kitchen garden for instance, utility becomes the law of their beauty. With regard to the cow in particular, which is referred to no variety of purposes, as the horse or the dog, the external structure will express more absolutely and unequivocally the degree in which the purposes of her species are accomplished; and her beauty will be a more determinate subject for the judgment than where the animal structure is referred to a multitude of separate ends

incapable of co-existing. Describing in this view, however, it will be said that Virgil presupposes in his reader some knowledge of the subject; for the description will be a dead letter to him, unless it awakens and brightens some previous notices of his own. I answer, that, with regard to all the common and familiar appearances of nature, a poet is entitled to postulate some knowledge in his readers: and the fact is, that he has not postulated so much as Shakspere in his fine description of the hounds of Theseus, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, or of the horse of Arcite;* and Shakspere, it will not be pretended, had any didactic purpose in those passages.

This is my correction applied to the common idea of didactic poetry; and I have thought it right to connect it with the error of so distinguished a critic as Lessing. If he is right in his construction of Virgil's purpose, that would prove only that, in this instance, Virgil was wrong.

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* In the *Two Noble Kinsmen*. The first act has been often and justly attributed to Shakspere; but the last act is no less indisputably his, and in his very finest style.